

TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
HELD AT PHILADELPHIA
FOR PROMOTING USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

NEW SERIES—VOLUME 40, PART 2

1950

LIFE OF JULIUS CAESAR SCALIGER
(1484-1558)

VERNON HALL, JR.

*Professor of Comparative Literature
Dartmouth College*

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THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
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PREFACE

When I first began, some five years ago, to work on this book I did not clearly understand why no one had yet written a full length study of Julius Caesar Scaliger. At first, I believed that the confusion over whether Scaliger was of the Princely family of Verona or the son of a sign-painter named Bordoni had deterred others. Naturally I hoped to give the answer. Plunging into the numerous writings on the subject I finally emerged after months of exertion with little more than a healthy skepticism.

Yet as I worked on Scaliger's own writings I grew into the opinion that the real interest in Scaliger's life lay outside this field. He accomplished so much in the republic of letters that even that part of his life which can be fully documented contains more than enough to justify a biography.

Then it was, though, that I understood why such a superior man as Sir William Hamilton gave up, and the learned Mark Pattison was forced by illness to lay aside, the Scaliger biographies that they had decided to write. So widely did Scaliger's genius range that in order to do it justice one would have, as George W. Robinson remarks of Joseph Scaliger's, to be another Scaliger.

So it is that though this book gives all the important things known about Scaliger's life, it cannot pretend to do full justice to all of his works. They are discussed, to be sure, but largely in biographical terms and my own unsure judgment on them is buttressed wherever possible with the opinions of authorities in the various disciplines. Yet my own opinions have at least the advantage of being unbiased. I did not, as biographers often do, fall in love with my subject. Though recognizing his real worth I could not entirely sympathize with that violent and passionate man. On the other hand, I have, since so much has been written on behalf of Erasmus, Cardan, and Scaliger's other opponents, given him a fairer treatment than he has usually received.

The main authorities for Scaliger's life are himself and his son and their books are the primary sources for this biography. To them may be added the documents found in Agen, France, which were published by Adolphe Magen, Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore, and others in the volumes of the Société d'agriculture, sciences et arts d'Agen; and those which by a happy chance now repose in Philadelphia in the Archives of the American Philosophical Society. Next in importance are the notes of such French scholars as De Thou, Bayle, and Baillet who, though mainly dependent on published works,

were still able to collect oral tradition. Lastly come their followers, the compilers of the biographical dictionaries, who add nothing to what was not already known. Complete references are listed at the end of the book under the heading "References." This has enabled me to reduce the titles of books, etc., in the footnotes.

I quote frequently from the writings of Scaliger and his friends. For the prose this presented only the problem of translating, or finding an adequate translation already done. The poetry, however, presented difficulties. Too much of it, quoted as prose, would have been dull. Therefore, I often turned it into English verse whenever, as usually happened, I could not find a poetic version made by someone else. At their worst, my stanzas remind the reader that Scaliger and his friends were writing in verse. And, it must be admitted, the originals were often so mediocre that I felt little of the embarrassment which the translator of poetry is supposed to feel.

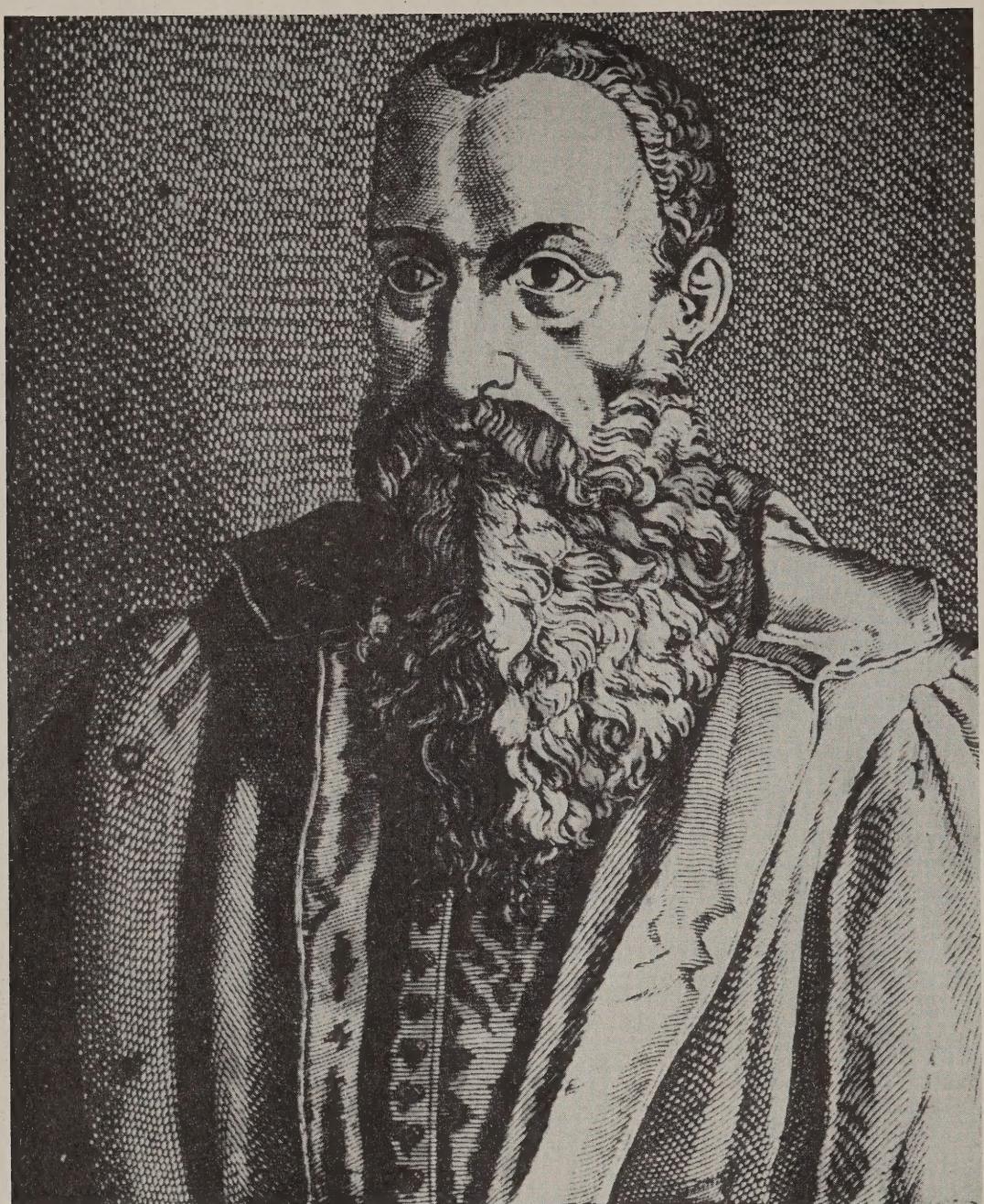
Without the help of others this book could not have appeared. Professor Charles R. Bagley made copious notes from the Pattison manuscripts at Oxford. The Librarian of the American Philosophical Society, Dr. William E. Lingelbach, and his staff most courteously gave me every assistance in consulting their Scaliger manuscripts as did Dr. G. I. Lieftinck, the Keeper of the Western Manuscripts at the University of Leyden. Nor would my stay in Leyden have been as profitable without the good offices of my friend and fellow Scaligerian, W. E. van Wijk, Director of the Collège Néerlandais in Paris. The officers and members of the Société académique d'Agen were most cordial in welcoming me to Scaliger's home city and giving me the use of their facilities. The staff of the Baker Memorial Library of Dartmouth College met my every demand for books and microfilms with cheerful efficiency. A grant from the Dartmouth Faculty Committee on Research helped pay for secretarial aid.

For throwing light on certain difficult passages in Scaliger's Latin I want to thank Professors William S. Messer, Royal C. Nemiah, Rossiter Bellinger, and Mrs. Gladys Churchill. Particularly helpful were Professors Don Cameron Allen, Henry M. Dargan, and Thomas S. K. Scott-Craig, each of whom read the manuscript in its entirety and gave me valuable assistance.

And my greatest debt is, again, to my wife who finds time in her busy life to act as my secretary whenever I need her.

This book is dedicated to my mother and father.

V. H. Jr.



IVLIVS, CÆSAR, SCALIGER,
N. Lamefri. sculp.

FIG. 1. Julius Caesar Scaliger.

LIFE OF JULIUS CAESAR SCALIGER

(1484-1558)

VERNON HALL, JR.

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I. THE ADVENTURER

When a certain Mark Anthony of the famous Italian family of the Roveres arrived in Agen, in Southwestern France, in the second decade of the sixteenth century, he brought along with him his personal physician, Master Julius Caesar, who had been under the protection of his family for some time. This latter was a majestic-looking man of some forty years of age who was to become renowned as one of the greatest scholars of the Renaissance. Indeed, so great became his fame in all branches of learning that it was for long considered that he was the greatest scholar who had ever dwelt in France. Even those who might have felt called upon to deny him this title were willing enough to bestow it upon his son Joseph. Surely no family has ever produced so learned a pair in successive generations.

As if the luster of mighty erudition were not enough, father and son claimed to be descendants of the Della Scalas of Verona, rulers and princes of that city, of a family so ancient that it could trace its lineage back through heroes and princes to the time of Attila the Hun. In French they called themselves Lescale, and in Latin, Scaliger.

Such preeminence, combined with the fact that both father and son were proud and at times quarrelsome men, could not but arouse jealousies, and their pretensions to princely descent came under attack near the end of Joseph's life. The leader in this attack was a certain Gaspard Schoppe, known by his Latin name of Scippius, who claimed that the father of Julius Caesar, far from being a prince, was merely a painter named Benedetto Bordoni who used a ladder as a sign over his paint-shop and thus might have been called Della Scala (of the ladder).¹ This version of the Scaliger's antecedents

has been widely accepted, but this acceptance is, according to the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, nothing but an illustration of Francis Bacon's grim aphorism, "if you slander boldly enough, some will stick."²

The learned Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, who left notes for a Life of Julius Caesar Scaliger which he intended to write has this to say in his manuscript:

The claims of J. C. Scaliger to princely descent have been uniformly treated by his biographers as a piece of whimsical jollity, the only [failing] of a great mind, which it is the duty of a pious biographer to gloss over as lightly as possible. It is not so. This belief cherished by the father influenced the whole life of the son and must form for us the clue to his entire character. J. C. Scaliger died in 1558, and it was not until 1594 that his son committed to paper the facts of his father's life, as he had received them from himself. Some details may have been lost by this delay. That nothing was added we have a sufficient guarantee in the careful accuracy and scrupulous truthfulness of the son. But if any confirmation were wanting, it may be found in the fact that the critics of the day, with every wish to detect a flaw and to overthrow the princely genealogy, were able to point out only a few insignificant errors in the narrative.³

used in this chapter and the claim that his family was descended from the Della Scalas of Verona. Scippius in his *Scaliger hypobolimaeus* (Mainz, 1607) asserts that Joseph's book is a tissue of lies and that Julius was the son of a sign painter. Joseph answers him in *Confutatio stultissimae Burdonum fabulae* (Leyden, 1608; I have used the edition of 1617); here he makes short work of Scippius' fables but is unable to prove completely his main point. This controversy flourished for centuries and if all writings about it were gathered together they would compose a small library. Merely to give its history would require that this chapter be as long as all the rest together. Having spent hundreds of hours reading and weighing the evidence I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that no final word can be said on the matter unless new documents come to light.

² Earl of Oxford and Asquith, 1919: 5-7.

³ Pattison Ms. 88: 1. My friend and colleague Professor Charles R. Bagley took the trouble of going to the old Bodleian the year he was Visiting Professor at Oxford and examining the Pattison manuscripts for me. Here and wherever I use material from them I am in his debt.

¹ Joseph Scaliger's *Epistola de vetustate et splendore gentis Scaligerae et Jul. Caes. Scaligeri vita . . .* (Leyden, 1594; the edition I use is the one printed in the *Epistolae*, Leyden, 1627) contains the details of Julius Caesar Scaliger's early life

However, since it is not until Julius Caesar Scaliger arrives in Agen that we can document his life in convincing detail, and since no manuscripts have come to light which prove his descent from the Della Scalas, there cannot but be some doubt as to whether he and his son were telling the truth. That the accounts of his early life given by him were untrue, has not, however, been proved by his enemies. Their assertions can be proved false time and time again by documents that still exist. It must be said, too, that no one during his lifetime ever questioned Julius' princely descent, and not only did he have friends among the greatest of the Italian nobility, but even such mighty enemies of his as Erasmus, Cardan, and Rabelais did not deny his story. And from Rabelais' hand we have a letter which actually states that Julius Caesar is a descendant of the Princes of Verona.⁴

Still, the careful scholar cannot be completely satisfied, and the details of Scaliger's early life which follow must, since they rest largely on the authority of his son Joseph and himself, be recognized as lacking final authentication. Yet even the skeptic will recognize that those details are valuable since they tell the story that Julius Scaliger was able to make his contemporaries believe.

After the Scaligers had been driven from the lordship of Verona they did not cease to hope that some day they could win the city back from the Venetians. William, the last prince of Verona, died in 1404. His son Nicholas and his grandson Benedict negotiated with Matthias, King of Hungary, and with the Emperor Frederick, in an attempt to secure their aid in reconquering the Scaligers' ancient possessions. Benedict attained such favor with Matthias that for seventeen years he held the command of his forces. The Venetians hearing of their conspiracies decided that there would be no peace until no one was left alive who could claim descent from the Princes of Verona. Late in April, 1484, they attacked the castle of La Rocca at Riva, located at the entrance to Lake Garda. Here a few days before Julius

⁴ The most complete arguments in favor of the princely descent of the Scaligers may be found in the Scaliger family papers now in the Library of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. There are several lives written by and for members of the family. They put great weight on the fact that no one attempted to refute Julius Caesar's claims in his own lifetime and that these claims were admitted by the officers of Louis XIV when the titles of nobility throughout France were verified. A good summary of the arguments in favor of the Bordoni thesis is given by Scipione Maffei, *Verona illustrata* 3: 283 ff., Milan, 1825. Apostolo Zeno, though not accepting the Della Scala story, demolishes the Bordoni fable in his notes to Giusto Fontanini, *Biblioteca dell' eloquenza Italiana* 2: 268 ff., Venice, 1753. Just to make the matter more complicated, Dr. L. De Santi in *Le Diplôme de Jules César Scaliger, Mémoires de l'académie des sciences, inscriptions et belles-lettres de Toulouse, 2^e série*, 9: 93-113, gives a third story. With little or no evidence to back him up, he declares that the Scaligers were undoubtedly of the Slavonic race and that the name was Scalish.

Caesar⁵ had been born. Alone in the castle except for servants, her new baby, and her two-year-old son Titus, lay the mother, Berenice Lodronia. Warned of the enemies' arrival by the peasants rushing to the castle for protection for themselves and their dearest possessions, she courageously rose from her bed, seized her two sons and fled. While she hastened to the castle of the Count Paris her father, the peasants stood off the Venetians. Then, the castle was taken and thus was splintered "the last plank of the wrecked boat of the Scaligers."⁶

Julius with his brother Titus was put in the hands of the learned Giovanni Giocondo of Verona,⁷ a client of the family. From him, Julius had chance to derive little more than the love of learning since in his very early teens he was introduced by his father to the court of the Emperor Maximilian, where he was put among the young nobles who served as pages. Henceforth his learning, as befitting a young nobleman, was directed toward martial rather than intellectual pursuits, though his son claims he also studied at this time under Albrecht Dürer. The Emperor was jealous of his reputation for military science and he himself noticed that the boys were skilled both in courage and the use of arms. Among the young men Julius was outstanding. He had early learned to work continuously, indeed excessively. Having great physical strength, too, he was soon a hero in the public tournaments.

He perfected his military knowledge by following the Emperor's banner in many campaigns. To the joy of the Scaligers, Maximilian in 1508 entered into the league against the Venetians formed between Pope Julius II; Louis XII, King of France; and Ferdinand V, King of Aragon. Here was a chance for the recovery of Verona; Julius, Titus, and their father and uncle followed the Emperor in his campaigns. Peace being made with Venice, Maximilian did not restore the Scaligers to the throne of Verona but hastened into a war with France. At this, Benedict addressed himself secretly to the King of France asking his help in recovering his throne. The King answered his proposition by remarking that he would have "nothing to do with a nobility which, lacking a fortune, was striking hard on the graves of its ancestors."⁸ Nothing daunted by this rebuff, Benedict switched back to the service of the

⁵ Joseph gives the date as April 23 (1627: 27), but a poem of Julius' has been deciphered by De Santi as giving April 27 as the date (1921: 45). The favored date in the Amer. Philos. Soc. documents is April 24. Julius claims his name was bestowed upon him by Paulus Mideburgus who used his knowledge of the stars to pick a favorable one (J. C. Scaliger, 1557, *exercit.* 266).

⁶ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 28.

⁷ He is best remembered as an architect. He built the bridge of Notre Dame in Paris, fortified Treviso, and helped Raphael at Saint Peter.

⁸ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 30. Almost all of the biographical details of this chapter may be found scattered throughout J. C. Scaliger's *Poetics*, *Exotericarum*, etc. and *Poemata*. I have based my narrative in this chapter on Joseph's *Vita* as the most complete and used the others only to add items he does not give.

Emperor. On Easter day, 1512, the family was present in one of the imperial detachments that fought against the French at the Battle of Ravenna. The Emperor had forces fighting on both sides in this battle. Here both Benedict and Titus met their deaths; and Julius Caesar, after greatly distinguishing himself by rescuing their bodies, was thrown so violently from his horse that he was taken off the field as dead. After his recovery he was taken before the Emperor, who praised him for his valor, made him a knight, and awarded him gold spurs and the gold necklace with the eagle.

Julius Caesar obtained leave from the Emperor and accompanied the remains of his father and brother to Ferrara where his mother Berenice was residing. The shock of the double loss was too much for her and she succumbed to her grief. Thus Julius had to bury father, brother, and mother at one time. He was now alone.

One other blow was to shake him at this time. His sweetheart, Angela Paulina, committed suicide when she was told that Julius, too, had been killed at the battle of Ravenna.⁹ Poems which he wrote later in life in remembrance of this sorrow show that he felt it deeply for a while. However, if another poem of his is to be believed, he soon recovered and fell in love with one whom he calls "Circia." Nor was she to hold his affections long. A whole series of beloved women, all with pastoral names, are celebrated in his poems. Many were probably figments of the imagination.

At this time he suffered from great poverty, as an anecdote of his son tells us. He was visiting a baron in Savoy, who was related to the Scaliger family through one of its illegitimate offspring, when the baron's cook asked him to stand godfather for his new child. Julius Caesar asked why he was wanted for this office. The cook explained that all of his previous children had been held before the baptismal fount by wealthy men and that all of them had later died. His priest had advised him to pick the poorest man he could find next time, if he wanted his child to live. Julius Caesar admitted he had come to the right man and laughingly agreed to do him this favor.¹⁰

During this period Julius Caesar went by the name of the Count of Burden, a title taken from one of the family properties. His poverty was somewhat relieved at this time by Alphonso d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara, who remembered the alliances his family had formerly had with the Scaligers. Life at the Duke's court was not to Julius' taste, however. He resolved to become a Franciscan monk. It is said that he took this step because he wanted to become Pope in order to regain his family properties.¹¹ If he had succeeded in this ambition the church would have had another Julius II, another warrior who would have extended the rule of the Pope over many states. Yet, this was not to be. The monastic

life was displeasing to him and he broke with it. Ever afterwards he felt a dislike for monks, if his Protestant son can be believed.

It is unfortunate that more details of his early intellectual life are not known to us. He must have devoted much time to books even while a soldier, since the learning he achieved could not have been acquired without much labor. All we know, however, is that he did spend some time at the University of Bologna, then at the height of its fame. The atmosphere was tolerant and liberal and such teachers as Pomponazzi, Ferro, and Nifo gave him new enthusiasm for letters. His first love—scholastic philosophy—was put aside and he devoted himself to philosophy and Aristotelian physics. Here his military training came in good stead, since student life was far from monastic. Riots among the various "nations" into which the university was divided were the custom. Under the name of the "shaved-one of Burden" (because he wore his hair close-clipped) he became a popular leader among the students. His closest friends were two brothers of the ancient house of Plosciasque and a young member of the great family of the Roveres which gave Sixtus IV and Julius II to the Papacy.¹²

When these dear friends left the University, he for the first time devoted himself exclusively to his books and began to discover the satisfaction that comes with the mastery of humane letters. However, he was not yet ready to devote his life to peaceful pursuits. He abruptly left his studies and went in search of his old friends. First, he visited the Plosciasques in Piedmont, and from there went on to Novilara where the Roveres resided. For the first time, thanks to the kind hospitality of this family, he knew what it was to lead a relatively settled life. Settled it could be called, however, only for him, since the French had carried war into this locality and there were constant skirmishes. The Vice-Regent for the King of France, Lautrec, commissioned him and placed him at the head of one hundred men from the light cavalry. Seemingly, he did not so much engage in formal warfare as in raids. He continued in his studies during peaceful intervals. It is possible, if a letter of Bartholomew Ricci is correct,¹³ that he visited Venice during this period.

In one raid he gained both fame and treasure. Learning that Anne, the mistress of the Duke of Savoy, accompanied by a Franciscan juggler named Thomas was riding well protected by a convoy, with a pack-train containing much of the treasure and plate of the Duke, he laid his plans accordingly. Concealing his horsemen in the hills, he waited until the convoy entered into the plain and then swept down on it. A hot fight with the protecting cavaliers ensued, until seeing their chief fall they gave up. At this the infantry threw down their

⁹ *Poemata* 1: 496, 1600.

¹⁰ Joseph Scaliger, 1670, under word *barbarus*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, under word *Scaliger*.

¹² On these families see Adolphe Magen, 1873: 173.

¹³ Quoted by Girolamo Tiraboschi, 1812: 3: 1476. Tiraboschi upholds the Bordoni theory.

arms and Julius was master of the field. He took his booty and prisoners back to Novilara where he was greeted as a hero. In one day the Duke of Savoy had lost both his mistress and his treasure.

Military success was not enough. In the intervals of leisure left him he could not resist turning back to his books. More and more he found himself interested in medicine. He obtained the treatises of Hippocrates and Galen and studied them with the aid of a doctor friend from Turin. For relaxation he went on trips into the mountains, where he collected herbs of medicinal value.

Since he combined all this with his military career, and gave up sleep for study, his health broke down. No sooner was he recovered than he entered into all his former pursuits and even added one more—the study of Greek. In one year he gained a knowledge of the ancient tongue (he transcribed a Greek manuscript about this time), but he paid for it with another physical collapse. Realizing that he could not be both a soldier and a scholar, he resigned his commission and decided to devote himself to letters. He had fought in the Low Countries, Greece, Macedonia, and Italy at some time or another in his career and as he looked back over his military pilgrimages he was filled with regret. How much there was to learn, and how much time he had wasted. He was now in his forties.

Medicine was so much a matter of humanistic learning in these days that he felt himself well-qualified to practice it. Whether he ever received a medical degree, and if so which one, is a matter of controversy.¹⁴ Yet skill was the important thing and his skill was known to the people with whom he resided. His medical learning led to a decisive adventure. Anthony Rovere was Bishop of Agen and felt obliged to visit his diocese. He had long hesitated to take the difficult trip over the Alps as he feared for his health. He begged Julius Caesar to come along with him into France. Julius did not look upon the idea with much favor. He had decided to be a learned man and now he was being asked to leave cultivated Italy for a France which seemed to him still in the shadows of barbarism. Yet, he could not resist the appeals of a family who had done so much for him, and he agreed to take the trip. He had it carefully understood, however, that he would not stay in Guyenne more than eight days, but would be allowed to return post-haste to Italy.

As Julius Caesar leaves Italy, we are able to free ourselves from our heavy dependence on the writings of himself and his son for facts about his career. When he arrives in France, we can put conjecture aside. Henceforth his life is led in the full sunlight of Guyenne and there are no shadows or rainbows to worry or distract us.¹⁵

¹⁴ See Dr. De Santi, 1921: 93–113.

¹⁵ The bishop first visited Agen in 1521 and though it is possible Scaliger came with him this early, it is probable that he did not come until 1524 or later. The bishop made several trips to Agen from Italy. Scaliger's letter of naturalization is

II. AGEN

Beyond the Alps lay barbarism, thought Scaliger. His first impressions of Guyenne could hardly have changed his mind. But he was not prepared for the beauties of the province, and the scenery helped soften his resolution to leave. Though this by itself would not have been enough, like many a man before him Scaliger discovered in his heart reasons which his intellect knew not of. He fell in love. Not for the first or second time, but most ardently.

On the arrival in Agen of the Bishop, the society of the town arrived to pay their respects and were, naturally, introduced to the Bishop's friend and physician. At one of the receptions at the castle Scaliger and his friends were talking over the events of the day and, in all probability, the doctor's prospective departure, when a lady arrived accompanied by four of her children. One of them was Andiette de la Roque Lobejac, a charming young girl in her fourteenth year. Scaliger was immediately attracted no less by her face than by her manners. She surveyed the world from behind a calm and serious forehead, and was completely at ease while being presented to the important strangers.¹ So lovely was she that the tradition of her beauty was kept alive in Agen for years after her death.²

France owes the Scaligers to this remarkable girl since Julius fell so completely in love with her that he gave up all plans for returning to Italy and decided that where her home was, there would be his also. Andiette was educated as a lady but in those days such education did not include literacy. She could not write, except her name, and the only book she could read was the Psalms.³ Since she knew them by heart, this was reading only in the sense the small child "reads." Yet, she was intelligent in action and speech. She could speak Lombard and French as well as Gascon, and she was so fluent in the last, her native tongue, that after he became her husband Scaliger said that if she had become a lawyer she could have won even the poorest law suits with her rapid wit.⁴

Her family came from Quercy and were noble if not as ancient and illustrious as her son would have us believe.⁵ Her grandfather Bernard de la Roque was a violent man who in the reign of Louis XII had killed a relative and had had to defend himself against a capital accusation in the Parliament of Toulouse—which he settled by giving the greater part of his property to the heirs of the man whom he had killed.⁶ Among his sons

dated 1528 and says that Scaliger had resided in France for around four years. Since Joseph tells us that his father had to wait three years for his bride and since we know the marriage took place in 1529 Scaliger may not have come to Agen until 1525 or 1526.

¹ Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 27–28.

² Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 39–40.

³ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *France*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, under word *Scaliger*.

⁵ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 40.

⁶ *Ibid.*

was Alain, Andiette's father, who died when she was a few years old. Bernard survived his son by one year, dying in 1519. Thus, Andiette, though she had three brothers, Bernard, Pierre, and Claude, was fatherless; and those who claim that her father opposed the marriage to Scaliger are mistaken.⁷ The great impediment to the marriage that Scaliger discovered was the age of the girl. Her guardians must have raised the obvious objections if Scaliger suggested immediate marriage.

Not only had Scaliger to wait until Andiette was old enough to be married, he had to convince her guardians that he was worthy of her. Worth to people of their class probably meant something else than solid erudition. It meant something more substantial. So, though he did not put aside his literary interests, Julius Caesar worked to establish himself as a respectable member of the community. In a remarkably short time he had built up a flourishing medical practice. But he did not forget for whom he was laboring. Many of his poems to Andiette were probably written at this time.

His success as a doctor was apparent not only in the considerable sums of money that poured in from his patients but in his growing reputation. Fullfledged doctors as well as medical students were attracted to Agen by a desire to learn from the master. Scaliger soon had a school on his hands. If his disciples had been allowed to practice, Agen would have been overstocked with doctors. So, he cannily made it a condition of entrance to his courses that no students could practice medicine while attending them.⁸

Now, if we are willing to accept the circumstantial evidence of De Santi, among those who found their way to Agen was a student in his middle thirties who had not yet taken even the first medical degree. His name was François Rabelais.⁹ He was not a savory character

⁷ Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 31.

⁸ Joseph Scaliger, 1670, under word *Aginni*.

⁹ Dr. De Santi in *Revue des études Rabelaisiennes* 3: 13-44, 1905; 4: 28-44, 1906; and in *Revue du seizième siècle* 8: 42-62, 1921 has worked out the relations of Rabelais and Scaliger. Here and elsewhere when I write of Rabelais I am dependent upon his researches although I have been careful to check them, extend them with my own research, and clarify them.

De Santi, knowing that Rabelais knew Scaliger and did not hesitate to call him by name, and recognizing Scaliger's habits of using pseudonyms for his enemies, discovered a number of Scaliger's epigrams that seem to have been directed against Rabelais. Since he published his researches as they were progressing instead of waiting until the evidence was complete, his articles do not put his case as strongly as they might have. Nevertheless, the mass of circumstantial evidence that he produces is convincing enough so that Rabelais' biographers have not hesitated to use it. Obviously, no circumstantial evidence can be considered as positive proof; but I am, until further evidence is produced, willing to accept De Santi's hypotheses as highly probable, and so have used them in this book.

Lucien Febvre in *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XVI^e siècle: La Religion de Rabelais*, 78-94, Paris, 1942, dissents strongly from De Santi. Although he points out one or two of De Santi's weaknesses (i.e., De Santi's misreading of "Baryoenus" for "Baryaenus" in order to make the pseudonym mean "heavy with wine") his arguments are not convincing. So anxious is Febvre

at first glance, having been twice a monk and having twice thrown away his cassock and having the reputation of being too fond of his cups. Thus Bibinus is an appropriate name for him. For instance:

On Two Drunkards:

The sot Loserus is drunk twice a day;
Bibinus only once; now of these say
Which may a man the greatest drunkard call?
Bibinus still, for he's drunk once for all.¹⁰

Yet, Rabelais seems, at first, to have made a favorable impression on Scaliger. Scaliger's epigram *De Bibino*, goes:

When Bibinus [the drunkard] and I saw each other often,
we were of one heart and one mind. Our disputes were the
friendly ones of two brothers. But since this malicious one
has left, we are now more brotherly than if we had the
same father. We agree perfectly. He doesn't want to
come to see me; I don't want him to.¹¹

What happened? We can conjecture that professional disagreement was at the bottom of it. Scaliger was one of the new men, a pragmatist who felt that the future of medicine lay in experimentation. Rabelais was, strangely enough, rather hidebound in his medical theories. Antiquity, the pebble which he was able to fling so accurately against the conservatives of his age in education, became a stone which weighed him down in medicine. Hippocrates and Galen had known all. To go against them was heresy. When Rabelais published his lectures on his two gods of medicine in 1532 he introduced them with this couplet: "Here is the inexhaustible source of medical art. Drink from it unless a stagnant pool appeals more to you."¹²

Superior in many ways to Scaliger, how inferior was Rabelais in his understanding of the true function of ancient letters. He threw over the shackles of the immediate past only to forge chains of the knowledge of the farther past. When he edited his *Letters of Ma-*

to prove his thesis that in his enthusiasm he is not entirely fair. For instance, Febvre makes a great point of a poem about "Bibinus" (one of the pseudonyms De Santi thinks hides Rabelais). The poem says that not only is Bibinus friendly to evil-doers but that all his relatives are. Febvre comments that this poem shows that Scaliger knew the relatives of Bibinus and since Rabelais' relatives were not in Agen, Bibinus cannot be Rabelais. He concludes, "Que de difficultés crée ce texte—que De Santi ne cite même pas." Thus Febvre implies that De Santi withholds a piece of evidence that would destroy his argument. Actually, the poem is a simple form of insult that tells Bibinus that not only is he an unsavory character but his relatives are equally unsavory. Febvre's argument is without value unless we would say that every time a man casts aspersions on another's ancestry, it proves he knows the other's mother.

¹⁰ *Poemata*, 1: 332, translated by Edward Sherburne, *Poems*, Chalmers, 6: 622, 1810. The poems of Scaliger on Bibinus call to mind Ronsard's famous epitaph on Rabelais where he declares:

La fosse de sa grande gueule
Eust plus beau de vin toute seule
(L'Espuisant du nez en deux coups)
Qu'un porc ne hume de lait doux.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 1: 42.

¹² Rabelais, 1532.

nardi in 1532, he wrote against the experimental doctors like Scaliger in these terms :

In our profession of medicine, which, however, cleans itself up day by day, how few men try their best! There is at least one good thing and that is that in almost every class people feel that there are men who pass for doctors who, if you examine them closely, are found to be without learning, good faith and prudence. On the contrary, they are full of arrogance, envy and filth. They make experiments which cost the lives of the patients (as Pliny formerly complained) and are more to be feared than the illnesses themselves. Now distinguished people hold in high esteem those that register their attachment to ancient and errorless medicine. If these opinions become stronger and more widespread those charlatans and cheats, who far and wide have weakened human organisms, will soon be reduced to beggary.¹³

Such sentiments could not fail to annoy Scaliger. Then, Rabelais seems to have heaped fuel on the flames by transferring his allegiance to another doctor in the town, Jean Schyron. Schyron we learn from the *Scaligeriana*, a collection of Joseph Scaliger's table talk, is none other than the Calvus of Scaliger's epigrams.¹⁴ He is treated as a mere apothecary, an ignoramus who wrongly usurps the title of doctor. Typical of Scaliger's attitude toward him is one entitled *Apologus de se et Calvo*. In this poem Scaliger paints an amusing picture of himself as the lordly lion and of Schyron as the timid fox who faints at his sight. The lion jumps on him and rends him with his claws and tells him that though once they were friends the fox, because he has become jealous of the lion, must die.

Two other poems about him give a good idea of what passed for slashing epigrams in Scaliger's day. Schyron's parents seem to have been half-Jewish, and had been driven out of Spain and had found refuge in France. Scaliger's poem on Calvus' parents is as follows :

Half-ass is Calvus and his parents swine
Though both refuse to eat pork when they dine.
Wine guzzlers gave the drunken Calvus birth
Though water drinkers' sons love tavern mirth.
His parents' rogues, this Calvus is a thief.
A robber oft is upright parents' grief.
Black hearted son who came from coal black gang
Ass and a half who from swine parents sprang!¹⁵

Scaliger describes Schyron as a cutpurse who kills more of his patients than he cures. His knowledge of medicine comes from having served as a servant in a doctor's office. Nor are his physical characteristics left unnoticed. His baldness gives him his pseudonym, Calvus, and his physique is surpassed in contemptibleness only by his brain :

Reed-like the little legs that Calvus bear;
Scarce more than reed his tiny neck so spare.
Reed and a half his tiresome talk is, though;
But slimmer than a reed his brain we know.¹⁶

It looks very much as if Schyron were connected with Scaliger's school before he set up a rival establishment. At any rate, Rabelais did not endear himself to Scaliger by going over to the enemy. When Schyron left Agen to accept a professorship in medicine at Montpellier (he later became chancellor), Rabelais followed him and matriculated at that University on September 17, 1530, choosing Schyron as his *pater*, or patron. Since he was granted his Bachelor of Medicine six weeks later, Rabelais had obviously learned much before he arrived at Montpellier.

Rabelais does not pass out of Scaliger's life, however. He will come back into it at several times. Each time to Scaliger's sorrow.

Meanwhile, Scaliger's wooing made progress. He had the physical appeal of a manly man. His broad, muscular body, above average in height, was topped by a dark large head with an aquiline nose that made him look like the prince he claimed to be. He took part in the martial and athletic exercises of the nobility, where his training in the camps stood him in good stead. His son's description of these activities reminds us forcibly that he was a compatriot of the Rabelais who made his hero excel in physical exercises as well as learning. Joseph writes :

In our Guyenne as at the court of Maximilian [my father] was not to be equalled in riding, fighting, or fencing. Though he was bothered by gout, he raised two horses on his property, and broke them in on the greensward which lies between Agen and the Garonne, a delightful field which is unequalled in France. It is there that in a tournament he opposed M. de Carbon, an Agenais of noble birth and a good tilter. He overthrew his man, who up until then had been the champion. In Guyenne as in Piedmont, my father was considered invincible. Sometimes he pole vaulted with a pike to the height of the tallest buildings. Other times placing his hands on the outside of a fairly large wine cask he would throw himself in and out [with his feet together]. The Gascon nobility tried in vain to equal him.¹⁷

This remarkable physical strength was little diminished by time. Even when he was sixty-three, Scaliger could move a beam so heavy that four men of ordinary strength were required to budge it.¹⁸ His vigorous, passionate temperament made him more feared than liked by the citizens of Agen,¹⁹ but it captured the heart of Andiette. She wanted to marry him as much as he wanted to marry her. The delay irked them both.

Finally her guardians consented. The marriage took place April 3, 1529, when Andiette was sixteen and her bridegroom forty-five.²⁰ The disparity in ages was only slightly greater than the ideal one recommended by Aristotle, the philosopher Scaliger most admired. Aristotle, it will be remembered, advised men to defer their marriages until at least thirty-seven and then to marry a

¹⁷ Joseph Scaliger, 1627 : 40-41.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁹ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Scaliger*.

²⁰ This is the date given in the list of marriage contracts in the American Philosophical Library Scaliger Collection.

¹³ Rabelais, 1868-1903 : 5 : xviii.

¹⁴ Joseph Scaliger, 1670, under word *Scirrhonius*.

¹⁵ *Poemata* 1 : 609.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 1 : 601.

girl of twenty.²¹ That it was a successful marriage we have ample evidence. They lived together for almost thirty years and Andiette bore him fifteen children.

Her son wrote:

It is to her he owed all he did for the public good and for himself. She calmed those vain agitations which had heretofore troubled his life, and by her exemplary conduct channeled his capricious and changing humors into a wise course. She undertook the management of their establishment, and created for him a freedom of mind which permitted him to resume his studies.

Her sweetness of temper was able to calm the storms of passion with which he was sometimes swept. When he became subject to attacks of gout in his later years, she took care of him, remarking that her soul had passed into his and in taking care of him she was taking care of herself.²² The wanderer had found a home at last.

She brought not only herself but a substantial dowry in the form of the domain of Monbran (called Vivès and to which his descendants gave the name Vérone in memory of the Della Scalas²³) and a house on Saint George Street across the courtyard from the church of Saint Hilaire. Scaliger moved into their home after his marriage and lived there until his death. Over the main door he had sculptered the arms of the princes of Verona. Thus, by his marriage, Scaliger obtained the status of a propertied citizen.

The material advantages he was to gain from marriage with an heiress were as nothing compared with the energy and purpose that resulted before his marriage from his feeling that he must make a name for himself that would make him a desirable match for Andiette. The three years between his meeting with his future wife and the marriage were the years in which Scaliger adjusted his mind and body to hard labor so successfully that he continued throughout the rest of his life to produce an almost unbelievable amount of work. He succeeded in establishing himself firmly as a doctor and was soon in possession of a sizable income.

During part of this time, Scaliger lived in the Bishop's residence and was able to put aside the money he earned. In spite of Scioppius' assertions to the contrary we have documentary proof of these facts in a judiciary disposition made in 1566 by an old soldier, Captain Antoine Latampe:

I knew Sylvius de Lescale since his birth, and Damoiselle Andiette de la Roque for the last forty years—two or three before her marriage with the said M. Jules de Lescale, to whom she brought as dowry the house in the city of Agen, Cordeliers street, as well as the property at Vivès, situated

²¹ *Politics* 7: 16.

²² Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 39.

²³ J. Momméja gives the history of this historic estate in the *Revue de l'Agenais* 35: 289–314; 413–420. The original name of the property was Foulayronnes (i.e., *Fons Latronum* or *Fountain of Thieves*). Julius Caesar never calls it anything but Vivès. It is not until after his death that it is called Vérone. Though some have thought that Scaliger built the chateau on the property, Momméja is certain it was there when he received the estate from his wife (p. 302).

in the parish of Monbran, jurisdiction of Agen. The Damoiselle de la Roque received neither gold nor silver, which I would have heard of during the time the marriage was being transacted, since M. de Lescale and I lived then together in the house of M. d'Agen; and I knew him so well, being his servant, that I rendered him the service which he asked me the day of his marriage. The said de Lescale said that he was a native and lord of Verona in Italy. He possessed no wealth when he transplanted himself to the city of Agen, but as he was one of the learned and indispensable doctors of Europe, I heard and saw that he earned gold and silver in abundance; so that he died very rich and opulent. He raised his sons in the famous universities of France with the result that they are great characters amongst the learned scholars. He placed his daughters honorably; he gave to each of them two thousand pounds or a thousand écus. He bought several beautiful properties. As he was honest and virtuous, he kept honestly the said La Roque, his wife, and lived comfortably in his house. I have never heard that there were quarrels or separations, even though I went daily to visit the said de Lescale, in reason of our familiarity. M. de Lescale stayed in his bed for ten or twelve years before his death, sick from the gout, never leaving his house. During that time, I went to visit him and saw the said La Roque govern and administer all to the extent that was good and necessary, both the person as well as the property of the said late de Lescale, who did not concern himself, in those last years, with anything but his studies, which were highly considered, as prove the many learnedly written books he left to posterity after his death.²⁴

The old captain's disposition anticipates our chronology somewhat but the glimpses it gives into the domestic life of the Scaligers makes it worth placing here. For it shows that Andiette and Julius were from the first to the last one of those ideal couples whose married life is harmonious because all labor is divided according to a reasonable recognition of the differences between the husband and the wife.

Agen was henceforth to be his home. Whether out of a desire to become a citizen of the country where he was going to live, or merely out of a wish to escape the penalties laid upon foreigners, Scaliger decided to become naturalized a year before he became a married man. He received a letter patent in March, 1528. The document, signed by Francis I, follows. After the usual formula it continues:

We received the humble petition of our dear and well beloved Julius Caesar de Lescale de Bordoms, doctor of medicine, native of the city of Verona in Italy, relating that for four years or thereabouts, he has resided in this our realm in the city of Agen in Agenois, with the intention and real resolution to remain there the remainder of his days, in which city and its environs the said petitioner has acquired a house and many other goods. But because he is a foreigner and not a native of our realm, he wonders whether the properties that he has acquired thus and those he hopes to acquire in the future, together with those which from his relatives or others might come to him, may not be claimed as belonging to us by escheat, or otherwise, and whether our officers may not give him some molestation, if he be not qualified and dispensed with in that respect, and humbly re-

²⁴ Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 40 ff. That Scaliger soon added to the family properties, by purchasing land adjacent to that his wife brought him, is shown by Bourrousse de Laffore, pp. 21 ff.

questing us to grant him our favor and liberality. We therefore, having considered these things, freely consenting to the petition and request of the said petitions, for these and other reasons moving us, give and grant leave, by these presents that he be allowed to dwell in our said realm, and hold all such possessions, moveable or immovable, as he has or may hereafter lawfully acquire, and also that he may succeed to all those goods and inheritances, which in our said realm, country, lands and lordships, may justly devolve upon or belong to him, and that he may dispose of them by his last will as his proper goods and inheritances, and that his heirs or others, to whom he may bequeath them, may succeed to and take possession and enjoy the said goods; and in general, that he shall enjoy entirely all the honors, privileges, prerogatives, franchises, liberties, and rights, which are usually enjoyed by those born in our said realm, and that he shall be held and accounted our subject, in all cases as a native of the said kingdom; and therefore we have qualified and dispensed, and do qualify and dispense him, of our said grace by these presents, he paying us a moderate sum for once only. We give in command by these presents to our truly and well beloved officers our accounts and treasury at Paris, bailiffs, seneschals, and all our other justiciaries and officers, or to their lieutenants for the present and future, and to every one of them, whom it may concern, that they permit the said petitioners to enjoy fully our present grace, license, habitation, and all the effects by these presents granted, without giving or suffering to fall upon him any disability, disturbance, or hindrance in any manner whatever, etc. Given at Paris in the month of March in the year of Grace one thousand five hundred and twenty-eight, and of our reign the fifteenth. Thus signed. By the King. Gedygnm. Visa. Contentor. Des Landes.²⁵

This document contains several points of vital interest. Not only does it make no mention of Scaliger's pretensions since he is merely called Jules César de Lescalle de Bordoms, but it also shows that he had acquired property by the date it was issued and either did not go to Andiette with empty hands or had received the house from her at some time before March 1528. It gives evidence that Scaliger recognized both that he intended to stay in Agen for the rest of his life and that he could not contemplate doing so under the heavy disabilities a foreigner had to bear. Further, it leaves the way clear not only for him to establish a family protected by French law, but to receive any office that might naturally fall to a man in his position. A position as Consul of Agen was one which would establish him as a member of the ruling élite and we cannot doubt that he intended eventually to acquire it. Thus, these letters patent paved the way for all advancement, political, economic, and social, that the man himself was capable of. Henceforth, he was a Frenchman and could make his way as freely as any citizen of Agen of his class.

Agen had its drawbacks. It was not Italy. Yet, it gave Scaliger what a scholar needs most—peace. Some

ten years after he had established himself there, he could write:

I am happy in my dwelling, which is small but secure, neither disgraceful, or without a certain elegance. I am disgusted with those comings and goings that rob one of that dearest treasure, time. My books are with me; I delight in their help, their counsels, their generosity. If I find something I approve or understand less, I bear it with equanimity. My conception of gain is not to sell what I produce but to be judged well of by others. In this region they not only neglect letters, but deride them. If I come across a slightly learned man, literature is the least of the things we concern ourselves with. Our conversations are light but agreeable on the subjects of wars, storms, peace among princes, horse trappings and hunting. When it pleases me. I retire into a place apart. There I am with myself, and this myself is the intrepid vindicator of the truth.²⁶

III. THE CICERONIANS

His family life happily arranged, his property great enough so that he had no real financial worries, and his position in the community established, Julius Caesar Scaliger looked for new worlds to conquer. He read and heard of men younger than himself and with much less learning already famous in the world of letters. Thoughts of men in the past who had made their reputation when ten or twenty years his junior crowded his mind. He felt as had the first Julius Caesar when that Roman jealously remembered the youthful conquests of Alexander the Great.

But never mind; his literary birth might be delayed, but he would spring full-armed into the arena.

Erasmus of Rotterdam gave him his opportunity. Erasmus was king of the humanists and if one strikes at a king—and survives to be identified—one's name is assured remembrance. The immediate cause for Scaliger's publicly taking up the pen was the publication by Erasmus in 1528 of his *Ciceronianus*, an attack upon the widespread idolatry of Cicero by the writers of the age.

Since Scaliger considered himself a Ciceronian he took it upon himself to answer Erasmus. The quarrel between the two men was bitter and exciting, but in order to understand it we must first look into the background of their quarrel.

So great was the influence of the great Roman orator that it is an axiom among scholars that one never looks elsewhere for the sources of a Renaissance writer until one has looked in Cicero. His spirit ruled over the intellectual world for a longer time than that of any other writer. In his own lifetime it was argued that Cicero was the greatest of orators, but in the next century the Atticists attacked his style as over rich and inflated. Quintillian sprang to the master's defense and became the first of the true Ciceronians. It was he who said,

... for posterity the name of Cicero has come to be regarded not as the name of a man, but as the name of eloquence itself. Let us, therefore, fix our eyes on him, take

²⁵ An original is now in the collections of the American Philosophical Society. The form in which Scaliger's name appears throws no light on whether he was known as de Burden (Joseph's contention), or Bordoni (Scioppius'). Actually, the legal scribes were so careless in their spelling that I would hesitate to give any weight to evidence based on local spellings. In the will of Julius Caesar Scaliger, also in the American Philosophical Society, his name is once spelt *Espiritus*.

²⁶ J. C. Scaliger, *Oratio 2: 38*, 1621.

him as our pattern and let the student realize that he has made real progress if he is a passionate admirer of Cicero.¹

Cicero's influence continued strong throughout the third and fourth centuries. St. Jerome, it will be remembered, heard a voice with the accusing accents, "Thou art not a Christian thou art a Ciceronian." During the Middle Ages proper, however, the church fathers pushed Cicero into the background and among the ancient writers he ranked below Virgil. Yet it was to Cicero's *De Amicitia* that Dante turned in the hour of his bereavement.

To Petrarch goes the credit at the beginning of the revival of learning of holding Cicero up to admiration both as a stylist and as a man. Henceforth, the personality of Cicero will play a part almost as important as his eloquence. A good deal of the individualism of the early Renaissance was learned by studying what characterized an individual in Cicero's letters.²

Italy was the home of the Ciceronian school. Most of the humanists were Ciceronians. Valla, though himself an admirer of Cicero attacked Poggio, a stricter Ciceronian, for priding himself upon a style which when examined turned out to be all surface splendor without content. Politian too refused to follow Cicero exclusively. He loved rare and archaic words and searched for them wherever they could be found. As a result of his eclecticism he was involved in a controversy with Paolo Cortesi and Bartolomeo Scala, both of whom fought under the banner of Cicero. Politian called his opponents "apes of Cicero," a title they were proud to own.

In the early sixteenth century, the great Ciceronian was Pietro Bembo. He upheld Cicero against the eclecticism of Pico della Mirandola and evolved for himself a style which has been called the most perfect imitation of Cicero that has ever been achieved.³ Although never devout, he became papal secretary to Leo X and later was made cardinal. It is from his writings that one frequently quotes to illustrate the pagan character of the Renaissance. He advised a fellow cardinal and brother Ciceronian not to read the Bible lest the purity of his style should be corrupted. He could hymn Saint Stephen and Priapus in the same polished Latin. Since he did not desire to use words not found in Cicero, he called the Senate of the Venetian Republic *Patres Conscripti* and had them urge the Pope, "to put his trust in the immortal gods, whose vicar he is on earth." In his Latin, Christ became, "Minerva sprung from the head of Jove," and the Holy Ghost was "the breath of the celestial zephyrs."⁴ The official letters he wrote for Pope Leon X were dated by Kalends, Nones, and Ides, rather than by the Christian era, and in them he has the Pope call on "men and gods" to witness the truth of his statements. Yet such was the authority of Bembo that

when Erasmus attacked the Ciceronians he carefully excluded him by name even though his writings were the most perfect and most obvious expression of the very things Erasmus was protesting against.

Scaliger felt himself of this school and honored the names that adorned it. Nor was this his only reason for wanting to try his hand against Erasmus. Personal glory aside, there were several scores he wanted to settle with the great humanist. In 1513 or 1514, shortly after the death of the great Della Rovere Pope, Julius II, Erasmus had written a dialogue called the *Julius Exclusus*⁵ which was printed in 1517 after having circulated widely in manuscript. Although Erasmus did everything possible to conceal his authorship, his contemporaries knew he had written it and modern scholars have proved beyond the possibility of a doubt that he did.⁶ This *Julius Excluded from Heaven* was a violent satire on the Rovere Pope which could not but have offended Scaliger, not only because it attacked a family to which he was bound by ties of gratitude, but because much of the material in the dialogue probably originated among the Venetians,⁷ the most violent opponents of Julius II, and the traditional enemies of the Scaligers. Joseph Scaliger in his *Scaligeriana* reports that the Venetians even sent assassins to Agen to kill his father.⁸ Although Joseph is probably guilty of romancing a bit, the fact is that the family still felt themselves the personal enemies of the Adriatic republic. From Julius' point of view, then, Erasmus had attacked his patrons with ammunition furnished by his worst enemies.

When one remembers that the Della Rovere family had gone out of their way to be friendly to Erasmus, that it was probably through the intercession of Julius II that he received the doctor's degree from Turin, that it was from the same Pope he won permission to throw aside the habit of his order, and that the family had offered him benefices to stay in Rome, the Roveres and their friends had good reason to be annoyed. That Julius Caesar knew of these things we need not doubt, and he could not have felt that the strong language he used against Erasmus was more than that scholar deserved.

It took great courage to stand up against Erasmus. Erasmus' dialogue against the Ciceronians is one of his best. It has molded opinion as only a real piece of polemical literature can. As a result, no one today mentions the Ciceronians except as examples of how pedantic Renaissance literary men were. Nevertheless, there is a great deal that can be said in their defence. The usual attitude toward the Ciceronians is that they were empty formalists who were more concerned with the way a thing was said than whether it was true or not. But, they were interested in more than they have been given credit for. Though this statement is con-

¹ *Institutiones oratoriae* 10: 1, 112.

² John Edwin Sandys, 1905: 150.

³ Henry T. Peck, 1911: 303.

⁴ Johann H. Kurtz, 1889: 2: 219.

⁵ Erasmus, 1933: 65-124.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁸ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Scaliger*.

try to the generally accepted position, a moment's thought will show us that it is true. Humanism in Italy had advanced to the point where it was beginning to invade the fields of metaphysics and science. For instance, Pietro Pomponazzi published in 1516 his revolutionary treatise on the immortality of the soul, in which he proved to his own satisfaction that both the soul and the intellect are material and thus it is impossible to hold that either should survive the body. This meant, he went on to say, that man need no longer live as he had in the past with eternity as his goal, but might now consider life on earth in terms of itself. Pomponazzi hastened to add that although as a philosopher he believed the theories he had propounded, as a Christian he had to deny them.

The Dominicans said that this treatise was contrary to the teachings of the Church, and urged the Pope to condemn it. The Pope referred the matter to Bembo, his secretary, who, needless to say, found nothing in the work to censure. Bembo's position was upheld by the Pope's Master of the Palace since Pomponazzi had carefully separated his philosophy from his belief as a Christian. Bembo's decision in this matter reveals the workable compromise which had been reached. He himself could be a pagan who would not even use the name of Christ in his writings and Pomponazzi could say whatever he desired as long as they made the conventional expressions of belief the Church required. The Ciceronians' emphasis on form was a step away from the dogma of the Church and a Ciceronian like Bembo could protect a man like Pomponazzi who had taken the next step toward modern rationalism.

This happy state of things was destroyed by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation which made it impossible to play the game any longer. Erasmus was a prime mover in forcing the matter to an issue. A letter of his to Francisco Vergera shows that he thought that Ciceronian language was a mask for pagan philosophy. He writes:

There is also another species of enemies who have lately begun to spring out of ambush. They feel put out that good literature should treat of Christ as if nothing could be elegant but what is pagan. To their ears Jupiter Best and Greatest sounds better than Jesus Christ the Redeemer of the World, and Conscript Fathers than the Holy Apostles. They extol Pontanus to the skies with their praises, while they turn up their noses at Augustine and Jerome. But I would rather have one ode of Prudentius hymning Jesus than a whole shipload of the poems of Pontanus, whose learning and eloquence in other directions I do not at all despise. Among these people it is almost more disgraceful not to be a Ciceronian than not to be a Christian . . . What means this odious boasting about the term *Ciceronian*? Under this pretense they hide their paganism, which is dearer to them than the glory of Christ. It will not much grieve me to be blotted from the list of Ciceronians, provided I shall be inscribed in the ranks of the Christians.⁹

⁹ Erasmus, 1906-1947: 7: 193-194. Translated by J. J. Mangan, 1927: 2: 294-295.

IV. ERASMUS

In 1528 Erasmus expanded his ideas on this intellectual tendency in a dialogue named the *Ciceronianus* which he incorporated in his *Colloquies* but later published as a separate work.¹ He dedicated it to his friend John Ulatenus, head of the College of Aix-la-Chapelle, whom he had known at Fribourg. In the dedication Erasmus tells his friend that he is disturbed by the corruption of morals which, at least in part, has been caused by the *Ciceronians*. This sect considers Cicero everything and is rapidly making pagans of young students. It is Erasmus' object, on the other hand, to show how one can be eloquent and still be a pious Christian.²

The dialogue proper takes place between three characters: Nosoponus, whose name means "one who suffers from a malady," is the Ciceronian; Bulephorus is the "counselor," and Hypologus is the "ponderer."

Nosoponus was once a ruddy, stout, jolly companion but now seems to be almost a ghost. It turns out that the disease he suffers from is the desire to gain the splendid name of Ciceronian. For ten years he has toiled and his friends are afraid for his health. Bulephorus pretends to be a Ciceronian too in order to cure his friend of this malady. "Who," he asks ironically "would not rather be celebrated in the eyes of posterity as a Ciceronian than as a saint?"³ Nosoponus thinks he has found a sympathetic listener and tells how he has tried to become a Ciceronian. He works in a sealed room on tranquil nights chosen for their auspiciousness by consulting the stars. With great labor he has compiled three lexicons. In the first he has listed all the words used by Cicero. If Cicero used *amo, amas, amat*, so may the Ciceronian, but if Cicero did not use *amamus* or *amatis*, neither can he. In the second he has collected the set forms Cicero uses. In the third lexicon he has gathered all of Cicero's meters at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of his sentences. In order to compose a letter, he has to use all three lexicons. It is no wonder then that the writing of six lines requires as many nights. Only in this way can one write in the true style of Cicero. If a man should compose a great book and employ therein one word not found in Cicero, the whole book must be condemned.

Bulephorus begins the cure of his friend by granting that imitation is a good way to gain a style but he insists that true imitation is the kind Zeuxis employed. When the painter wished to portray the beauty of Helen he copied the most beautiful features of several models.

¹ Erasmus, 1908. All quotations in this chapter are from Scott's translation. The original is printed with Scaliger's *Orationes duae* (Toulouse, 1621).

² President de Maussac of the Parliament of Toulouse is typical of those who refused to accept Erasmus' explanation. "To attack Cicero is to attack eloquence itself and to disown the studies of which it is queen is to put the state in danger," quoted by F. Ferrère, 1906-1908: 603.

³ Erasmus, 1908: 23.

Following this example, the aspiring writer should imitate from all the great masters of antiquity.

When Nosoponus, claiming that Cicero is perfect, rejects the analogy, Bulephorus begins to point out the defects of Cicero.

Erasmus admits that Cicero was the one author he could not endure to read at length.⁴ It is clear that he enjoys having Bulephorus denigrate Cicero. Bulephorus shows that even among the Romans Cicero's style was considered dry, jejune, sapless, and prolix. He declares that his out-of-season joking bordered on scurrility. Cicero was boastful, artful, and lacked moderation. Yet, even if one overlooked these faults, it would be impossible to be a real Ciceronian since a number of his works have perished and others have come down to posterity in corrupt and mutilated texts.

Next, numerous flaws and solecisms are culled from the writings of Cicero. Bulephorus speaks of

that suggestion of emptiness [in Cicero], that stroking of the chin with the left hand, the long and thin neck, the continual straining of the voice, the unbecoming and unmanly nervousness as he begins to speak, the excessive number of jokes, and everything else which in Cicero is displeasing to himself or to others. . . .⁵

After other attacks on Cicero's moral and political character, Bulephorus comes to what is perhaps Erasmus' main point. Cicero was a pagan; we are Christians. There are no words in Cicero to express the dogma of the Christian faith and those Ciceronians who call God "Jove" and Christ "Apollo," must be condemned by true Christians.⁶

The charge of Paganism against the Ciceronians is gone into at some length. Erasmus, becoming more and more intransient in his old age, lashes out at the whole secular side of the Renaissance.

If ever you have visited the libraries of the Ciceronians at Rome, recall, I pray, whether you saw an image of the crucifix or of the sacred trinity, or of the Apostles. You will find them all full of monuments of heathenism. Among the pictures, "Jupiter slipping into the Lap of Danae through the Impluvium" attracts our attention rather than "Gabriel Announcing the Immaculate Conception to the Holy Virgin"; "Ganymede Stolen by the Eagle" delights rather than "Christ Ascending into Heaven." Our eyes linger on the portrayal of bacchanalian feats and festivals of Terminus full of disgrace and obscenity rather than on "The Raising of Lazarus," or "The Baptism of Christ by John." There are mysteries hidden under the veil of the Ciceronian name. Under the show of a beautiful name, I assure you, snares are held out to simple-minded and credulous youths. We do not dare to profess paganism. We plead as an excuse Ciceronianism. But how much better it would be to be silent.⁷

Not content with declaring Cicero's style unmanly and thus inappropriate for Christians, Bulephorus contends that there has never been a real Ciceronian since Cicero anyway. He dismisses with contempt "the four

silly Italian youths" who boast they are Ciceronians and declares they have scarcely the faintest trace of the master. Not one of the Romans who lived after Cicero, not one of the Christian writers of the Middle Ages, can be considered a true Ciceronian.

It is, though, Bulephorus' discussion of the moderns that gave the greatest offence to contemporary readers. Not only are all the humanists from the time of the Renaissance of letters on denied the title of Ciceronians, but most of Erasmus' contemporaries are dismissed with a few well-chosen words of criticism or faint praise. To be sure, Erasmus makes fun of himself, too, but not without boasting of the great sale of his books.⁸ The Italians could not but be offended since it was they who were most closely identified with the cult of Cicero. It was, however, the French who were most annoyed. Erasmus spends much time making Christopher Longolius, the Frenchman whom the Italian Latinists most admired for his grace in the language of Cicero, look ridiculous. He declares that perhaps he alone can be truly considered a Ciceronian. He then shows how empty Longolius' Ciceronian phrases are when applied to modern affairs.⁹ Yet, it was Erasmus' treatment of Budé that gave most offense. The rise of the great French Hellenist had been watched by Erasmus with feelings that, according to one writer, bordered on fright.¹⁰ At any rate, Budé was the one scholar with whom Erasmus corresponded who treated him as an equal and who refused to indulge in the unrestrained tributes his other correspondents regaled him with. Thus, it must have been with great interest that Frenchmen read the *Ciceronianus*, to find out what Erasmus would say about him. They were enraged when they discovered that Erasmus dismissed him in much the same language that he used for the Parisian bookseller, Josse Badius Ascensius.¹¹

The dialogue ends with a discussion of what constitutes intelligent imitation, and both Hypologus and Nosoponus admit that they have been convinced by Bulephorus' argument.

Erasmus' witty and sensible dialogue might well have carried the day against the Ciceronians if he had limited it to his real point—the question of what constitutes a good modern Latin style. However, Erasmus laid himself open to strong opposition by his accusations of paganism made against the Ciceronians, his attempts to blacken Cicero's reputation, and his cavalier treatment of his contemporaries. So great was the furor aroused that Erasmus found himself attacked from all sides.

He probably realized that the Italians would receive his dialogue with little favor, but he must have been

⁸ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 110-116.

¹⁰ Léon Feugère, 1859: 1: xxxi.

¹¹ J. J. Mangan, 1927: 2: 291-293, gives in some detail the annoyance of the republic of letters at this treatment of Budé. Among those who attack Erasmus with epigrams is John Lascaris.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 35 ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 66-68.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

surprised at the vehemence of the partisans of Budé. The great scholar himself urged on by his friends, finally consented to express himself as feeling injured by Erasmus' treatment of him. Even one of Erasmus' ardent admirers, Jacques Tussan, joined those who were launching epigrams against Erasmus, with this one:

He Badius above Budé puts
And yet he is not blind;
Erasmus—cease to wonder now—
Likes better his own kind.¹²

Erasmus' close friend, Germain de Brie, protested in a letter to his "dearest Erasmus," that "Budé is to his fellow Frenchman what Erasmus is to his fellow Germans." Thus, he felt, Erasmus above all others should be able to understand the just indignation that was aroused in the minds of Frenchmen when Budé was given so much less than his due.¹³

If even Erasmus' close friends in the North were driven to so remonstrate with him, the feeling that was aroused in Italy can well be imagined. The Italians considered that Latin was, if not their mother's, at least their great-grandmother's tongue; and they ill-brooked a criticism of their use of it by one whom they esteemed a barbarian. Erasmus, with an extreme lack of consistency, had warded off in advance a reply from the leading Ciceronian, Bembo, by exempting him from his criticisms. This transparent maneuver left the answer to his dialogue in the hands of less well-known men.

If a reply to Erasmus had to be made it was fitting that it should come from the pen of Julius Caesar Scaliger, Italian by character and Frenchman by adoption. In his own person he could represent the two groups who were most dissatisfied with the *Ciceronianus*.¹⁴

V. DIFFICULTIES OF A LITERARY DEBUTANT

Scaliger borrowed the dialogue of Erasmus in 1529 from his friend L. Claudius and dashed off an answer in three days.¹ To write the oration was one thing;

¹² Desive mirari quare postponat Erasmus
Budaeum Badio; plus favet ille pari.

The Latin is quoted by Mangan, 1927: 2: 293. The English is mine.

¹³ Erasmus, 1906-1947: 7: 435-438.

¹⁴ For an English and Ramistic point of view on this controversy see Gabriel Harvey, 1945.

¹ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Epistolae* letter 11, 1620. Scaliger's two orations against Erasmus were printed in a volume at Toulouse. The general title page is dated 1621. However, this volume contains Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*, several letters of Erasmus, and—with separate title pages—Scaliger's *Epistolae* (1620) and his *Oratio 1* (1620) and *Oratio 2* (1620) as well as two of his minor works. As a result the date of the edition of Scaliger's *Orationes duae* is sometimes given by scholars as 1621 and sometimes as 1620. The letters printed in this volume are those that Joseph Scaliger did not see fit to print in the 1600 edition of his father's letters. They have also been reprinted in Schelhorn's *Amoenitates literariae*. I worked with a microfilm of the Yale University Library copy of the *Orationes duae*.

to get it printed another. Erasmus had many friends in Paris who would do everything they could to suppress an attack on their master. On the other hand, Erasmus' dialogue had offended men who were powerful enough to give Scaliger a helping hand.

In April Scaliger sent the manuscript and several letters he had written on the subject to Paris by a friend whom he directed to get in touch with the students of Paris.² Since his oration was dedicated to these young men he probably felt that they would welcome his defense of Cicero and the Gallic name against the attacks of Erasmus. If so, he was disappointed. His emissary left the writings in the hands of the students at the College of Navarre who promised to read them and answer Scaliger's letters addressed to them. Receiving this promise, Scaliger's friend returned to Agen. According to Naudé, writing of the incident, the students were so enraged by this harangue against their hero, Erasmus, that they dragged the documents through the mud and subjected them to unmentionable indignities.³ Hearing nothing for several months, Scaliger sent his ambassador to Paris again to find out what happened. On his return, Scaliger found out that the manuscript had disappeared and decided that either someone jealous of him had stolen it or that it had been turned over to Erasmus. Although Erasmus should have been grateful for Scaliger's attempt to call him back to reason, he was not and begged his Parisian friends to prevent the publication of Scaliger's work.⁴

Scaliger wrote letters protesting the theft of his manuscript. These letters, of which one is addressed to the thieves themselves,⁵ one to the students of the College of Navarre,⁶ and one to all the students of Paris,⁷ show how badly Scaliger felt he had been treated. He was genuinely amazed that the glory of Cicero had not found more defenders among the young men of Paris. He felt, as has many a literary debutant since, that his work was scorned, not because it lacked merit, but because the author was unknown. In the first of these letters this is abundantly clear. Since he thinks that he is suspected of low birth, he points out that the Scaligers possess as much fame and honor for great deeds as any family in existence, and a great deal more, probably, than the families of his detractors. He is afraid that the fact that for the third time he is an exile in a foreign land makes him an object of derision. If so, he would like to point out that no man's fortune is so secure that he may not some day fall. No person less merits his evil fate than he who has suffered it because of plots or the chances of war. To witness his past glory Scaliger appeals to those of his former soldiers and captains

² *Ibid.*, letter 10.

³ Cardan, 1643, preface.

⁴ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Epistolae*, letters 2 and 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, letter 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, letter 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, letter 10.

who are still alive. Even if they are all dead, his scars will bear him witness.⁸

Scaliger admits that he had hoped by his oration to become widely known in the land he had come to as a stranger, but alas, he defended the cause of Cicero only to be reduced to bewailing his own. But he does not completely despair.

Vengeance will be his. He will expose and disperse the thieves either in his own person or by means of his writings. When he publishes that manuscript which they thought to suppress, it will slash them into pieces. Furthermore, when they and the men he chose for his judges read his oration they will be condemned as infamous by the suffrages of posterity.⁹

Although Scaliger had kept a copy of his discourse he would not rest until the original was returned to him. It finally was in September. Beda, the most vigorous of Erasmus' enemies, came to the rescue at Scaliger's plea¹⁰ and saw that the manuscript was printed under the imprint of Pierre Vidoue with a permission of Lieutenant Morin, dated September 1, 1531. Its appearance was a victory over the machinations of the friends of Erasmus.

There is good evidence that they did not stop at attempting to prevent publication but seized as many copies as they could get their hands on and had them burned. Scaliger wrote to Arnoul Le Ferron that Erasmus employed a Fleming to buy and borrow as many copies as possible and to destroy them.¹¹ Joseph Scaliger declares in the *Scaligeriana* that "Erasmus . . . got his friends to buy up all the copies they could meet with, in order to suppress them."¹² In another place he writes, "Erasmus, who had emissaries everywhere . . . procured his minions to buy up all the copies at a high price and throw them into the fire."¹³ However, both of Joseph's remarks refer to Scaliger's second oration which was not printed until after Erasmus' death. Of course, it well may be that Erasmus' friends did try to burn up all the copies of the second oration as well in order to protect the reputation of their dead master. It seems more probable, though, that Joseph confused the two orations. We have Julius Caesar Scaliger's word only as to the burning of the first one. It is typical of the personal spirit in which the polemics of the sixteenth century took place that such a charge could be brought against Erasmus and that even some of his own editors and biographers accept the charge as true. Erasmus, like Voltaire, was not consistent. At least once he appealed to the magistrates to prevent his opponent Farel from publishing his work at Basel.¹⁴

VI. FIRST ORATION AGAINST ERASMUS

With a preface dated March 15, 1531, and entitled *Pro M. Tullio Cicerone, contra Desiderium Erasmus Roterodamum*, Scaliger's first oration appeared in Paris. The author complains of the delays and the fact that it took the intervention of Beda to get it into print at all.¹ The oration is preceded by a letter addressed to the students of all the colleges of Paris. Scaliger tells these excellent youths that it is a question whether one will be surprised that an unknown man like himself dares to give himself the splendid title of orator, or whether one will scoff at him for being stupid enough to fly in the face of the admiration people have for Erasmus, or, finally, whether one will blame his laziness for having delayed this answer to Erasmus so long. He gives his answers to the question he has raised one by one. His reply to the first point is, in essence, that one has to step into the limelight as an unknown if one is ever to become known and he gives examples of well-known young Romans, women among them, who pleaded public causes at an early age. As to his going against the received opinion on Erasmus, Erasmus has brought this on himself since by speaking ill of everyone else he deserves that the compliment be returned. This is especially just since Erasmus has been rude not out of love for the truth but of delight in slander for its own sake. As for Scaliger's delay in replying to the *Ciceronianus*, that, alas, is because he lives in Agen, far away from the center of things, where the sun serves less to make the land produce than to distress the inhabitants. The Agenais is more interested in cultivating his crop than his mind and whatever study of letters exists is undertaken for material gain alone. The only books sold are grammars and law books; and Scaliger, himself, has to write all over the world, to Basel, to Venice, to Florence, to Rome, to obtain the books he needs for his studies. Such an intellectual backwater is Agen that he only received Erasmus' abominable book six months ago.² This is partially due, of course, to the fact that the merchants who come to Agen are so shocked with the impiety of Erasmus that they refuse to carry any of his books. Even when he finally succeeded in getting hold of a copy of the *Ciceronianus*, he was unable to work on his reply to it because of the plague which forced him to move several times. Nevertheless, he finally began work on his refutation because he felt he would be supported by the students of Paris, so well-known for their love of literature and their hatred of barbarians. He promises them that if they approve of this book he has many more excellent ones underway that he will dedicate to them.³

⁸ *Ibid.*, letter 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, letter 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, letter 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, letter 16.

¹² Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Erasmus*.

¹³ Joseph Scaliger, 1617: 279.

¹⁴ A. Renaudet, 1939: 325.

¹ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Epistolae*, letter 9.

² This contradicts the evidence of letter 11 where he writes in December 1529 that he has seen Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*; unless there is an error in the dating of this letter or in that of the preface.

³ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 3-4.

Scaliger begins the oration proper with a plea that his young readers be indulgent with him since he admits that he is unworthy to defend Cicero. He will, though, he promises, compensate by orderly arrangement for what he lacks in eloquence. But he feels that the justice of his cause will in itself bring him victory. Erasmus is famous and fluent but Scaliger, in spite of his imperfections, will overcome him because the power and grace of Cicero will give life to his discourse.⁴

I want, O Cicero, my grateful voice to proclaim the services you performed for eloquence. At the cost of your life you were the savior of country and liberty. With you Roman eloquence died. . . . If you were alive these sacrilegious calumniators of your talents would not be seen. Would you, Erasmus, dare stand face to face with him before whom, in spite of the firm support of Hortensius and Catiline of indomitable spirit, Verres himself trembled?⁵

One key to Scaliger's attitude is his warm admiration for Cicero the man. What annoyed Scaliger most was what he considered the gratuitous attack in the *Ciceronianus* on Cicero's personal and political character. If only Cicero were alive to smash such presumptions with his thunderous eloquence!⁶ Two and a half centuries later Samuel Johnson felt the same annoyance. In a letter to a friend he wrote: "My affection and understanding went along with Erasmus, except that once or twice he somewhat unskillfully entangles Cicero's civil or moral, with his rhetorical character."⁷ Johnson saw what Scaliger did. That his comment is less excited can be explained by the fact that the issue was long since dead when he read Erasmus and that Cicero had begun to slide down from the preeminent position he held in the Renaissance, though he had not yet reached the nadir of becoming merely "Latin." Cicero was the great master of the age when Scaliger wrote, however, and the annoyance that the Ciceronians felt can only be partially appreciated by imagining the consternation among Shakespeare worshippers today if such an attack were made on their idol. Even so, the parallel is weak for few today would feel the sense of personal affront that Scaliger did when the father of eloquence was attacked. Scaliger's anger has been explained by an unfriendly critic as pique at not having been mentioned by Erasmus in his list of modern Latinists,⁸ but this cannot be accepted when one realizes that Scaliger was an unknown who was yet to publish his great works. His care in introducing himself to his readers is ample evidence that he realized that his local reputation had not spread as far as Paris. No, he must be given credit for defending, not his person, but a cause.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷ James Boswell, 1927: 2: 594.

⁸ Charles Nisard, 1860: 1: 337. Nisard's section on Julius Scaliger is of considerable value to anyone working with the two orations against Cicero in spite of the fact that Nisard's prejudice against the Scaligers makes his lives of Julius and Joseph "equally unworthy of their author and their subjects" (Richard C. Christie, 1902: 222).

Who is this Erasmus who has the effrontery to attack the great Cicero? Scaliger answers this question with a sketch of Erasmus' life. He started out as a monk but soon becoming tired of life in a monastery he deserted and began a life of wandering from town to town living as a parasite or correcting proofs for pay. It was in the Academy of Aldus Manutius that he was able to become learned by associating with the scholars gathered there. There he cultivated his biting eloquence and obtained a knowledge of languages. First, he compiled his *Adages* by collecting passages from ancient authors and reassembling them. The Renaissance of letters just beginning, this was enough to give him the name of a writer. Since that time he who dares to criticize Cicero for having made corrections in his books on rhetoric⁹ has not only corrected but actually remade this book. The satirical wit that this book revealed was given full rein after its publication and not only did he slander Cicero, but our Holy Religion itself, going so far as to attack the rampart of our safety, Jesus Christ.¹⁰ In alliance with knaves and drunkards he unleashed a storm which burst over the Christian religion which had hitherto been free of such attacks. Such was his entry in letters; such was his exit.¹¹

Scaliger now reveals the plan of his oration. He has divided it into three parts. In the first he will show Erasmus' plan; in the second that he has not been able to carry it out, and in the third he will refute it. Erasmus' intention was to denigrate the memory of Cicero and to this purpose he introduces into his dialogue a character, Hypologus, whose function is not actually to judge the evidence but merely to subscribe to all the forced and hypocritical subtilties put forth. In other words to play the same part Erasmus used to play, that of a parasite. Erasmus puts the discussion in the form of a dialogue after, so he says, the example of Plato and Cicero himself. But what a difference. In the ancient dialogue the purpose was to present the subject from different points of view, but in this dialogue the only purpose is to attack Cicero. There is a man, Bulephorus, who acts as both prosecutor and judge. The witnesses are in collusion and the defense attorney is an imbecile. Such is the trial.¹²

Scaliger now tells the student to whom this first oration is addressed that, although Erasmus' purpose was to snatch the palm of eloquence from Cicero, the actual results on the reader of the *Ciceronianus* is just the opposite. Being unable to disgust us with the eloquence of Cicero, Erasmus attempts to injure him by digging up all the old calumnies about Cicero that have long since been discredited and by inventing new ones. He accuses him of writing bad verse. He says that Cicero was so tormented by vainglory that he nauseates the reader with his boastfulness. He even accuses him

⁹ Erasmus, 1908: 41.

¹⁰ In *The Praise of folly*.

¹¹ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 9-10.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

of lacking good manners.¹³ If, Scaliger asks Erasmus, I can show you a man who wrote an eulogy of fever or another on the cruelty of Busiris would you say they were not eloquent because of the subject matter?¹⁴ You yourself, so perfect an orator, made an eulogy of folly. Who were you praising, others or yourself? What Rome did you save from the fury of Catiline? In which of your consulates did you save the fatherland? And you call Cicero immoderate.

No wonder, Erasmus, he continues, that you think so little of that Rome that Cicero labored in vain to save, that you labor to ruin its language. You even, as your stupid dialogue reveals,¹⁵ prefer Basel to Rome because you are the Pope of Basel. You have done everything in your power to undermine the Pope of Rome and are the cause of the traitor, Luther, whose accomplice you are. Nay, more, you are the father of his violence and excesses.¹⁶ Scaliger then answers Erasmus' criticism of Cicero's self praise by saying that much as he praises himself, the Latin and Greek historians have found that he did not do himself justice and have wanted to enrich his praises with their own.

A French critic unfriendly to Scaliger remarks that it is no wonder that Scaliger felt no dislike for Cicero's self-laudation since Scaliger had such a high opinion of himself that he could not understand modesty.¹⁷ That this is true of Scaliger cannot be denied but as Scaliger himself points out, Erasmus in the very dialogue he is speaking of pats himself on the back for the success of his colloquies. Actually, of course, the modest writer is the exception, even today. No one who labors hard over an intellectual creation can fail to feel tenderness for it, and if he deprecates it publicly, he expects you to contradict him. Both Cicero and Erasmus lived in ages in which the convention was different.

Scaliger then takes up what he considers Erasmus' petty personal criticisms of Cicero. Erasmus says Cicero caresses his chin with his hand. What does one do in Germany, asks Scaliger, caress it with one's foot? Scaliger seldom missed an opportunity to disparage the Germans. Earlier he has attacked their drunkenness.¹⁸ Since he feels that Erasmus belongs to the "Germans," he also feels that the *Ciceronianus* is an attack upon the genius of the Latin races. Erasmus tells of Cicero's long neck.¹⁹ Well, asks Scaliger, if you had one, would you cut it off? Cicero's voice was loud, says Erasmus.²⁰ And so it had to be, replies Scaliger, to make himself heard in the tumults of the assemblies and above

the vociferations of citizens and soldiers. Nature meant Cicero to be both a great consul and a great orator and gave him an appropriate voice. Erasmus implies that Cicero is a coward by suggesting he always trembled when he began a speech.²¹ Considering the immensity of the issues involved in his speeches, replies Scaliger, it is no wonder that his knowledge of oratory made him at least pretend to be nervous, if he were not so in actuality. And, after these attacks on Cicero, Erasmus is unconstant enough to end his *Ciceronianus* by saying that if Cicero had known the doctrine of Christ he would deserve to be numbered among the saints!²²

Scaliger now begins the third part of his oration. It is the most important. It consists of his defense of Cicero and his strongest attacks against Erasmus. Scaliger does not hesitate to say that Erasmus lies when he declares that too close imitation of Cicero is dangerous for Christian youth. It is the eloquence borrowed from Cicero that gives the truths of religion a convincing form. If we do not have the genius of Cicero, we can at least do our best—imitate him. Erasmus makes out that the Italians are particularly given to blind worship of Cicero. Here, Scaliger slyly defends the Italians and attacks Erasmus simultaneously by giving a picture of Erasmus' stay in Italy:

When having been unfrocked, you hid yourself at the house of Aldus like a bear who has escaped from his chains, the Italians employed with you in correcting proofs, furious to see you sleeping off your wine, detesting both your companionship at the tables and your eagerness to desert your labors, could scarcely keep themselves from laying hands on you. I think you are now attempting, by mocking their taste for Cicero, to get even with those you did not dare attack then. You know that what I say is as true as the oracle of Apollo. Some of the learned men who were at the house of Aldus were my teachers and told me all that I've said about you. Being of noble birth, eloquent and sober, they were incapable of being envious of you who hated eloquence and loved wine. Thus the Spartans in Greece, I have heard, gave children lessons in temperance by letting them see slaves inebriated in order, by the sight of their brutal brawls, to remove from them the desire of imitating them.²³

Scaliger then says that Erasmus is not the first of his compatriots to despise the great achievements of the Italians. No, not wishing to imitate Cicero, he imitates the barbarians who scorn all nations not their own. In these remarks Scaliger got in some blows that must have struck home. But even though one is tempted to feel that he holds his own when he defends Cicero's style and points out many errors in Erasmus', the part of his discourse in which he attempts to answer Erasmus' witty description of the foibles of the Ciceronians is the weakest part of the oration.

Erasmus' contention that the Ciceronians make it a practice to read nothing but Cicero for seven years can

¹³ Erasmus, 1908: 38 ff.

¹⁴ This passage looks forward to Scaliger's contention in his *Poetics* that verse makes poetry and that all subject matters are appropriate. It explains his great admiration for Fracastoro, the author of *Syphilis*.

¹⁵ Erasmus, 1908: 112-113.

¹⁶ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 11-13.

¹⁷ Nisard, 1860: 1: 328.

¹⁸ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 9.

¹⁹ Erasmus, 1908: 47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

²² J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 13-16.

²³ *Ibid.*, 17.

be shown to be false when we see that Cicero himself in his *Brutus* advises the reading of Cato. Of course, good Ciceronians follow their master's advice. Another lie is that the Ciceronians make more to do about the bust of Cicero they have in their studies than they do about the images of the saints. Not only, thinks Scaliger, is Erasmus guilty of copying Lucian's passage about the value attached by certain imbeciles to writing desks on which the ancient poets composed their work, but such a remark comes with little grace from a man whose own image, as well as that of his accomplice Luther, is peddled all over the countryside. His lies about the Ciceronians only working at night in rooms sealed up with plaster and pitch so that not even flies can get in²⁴ is merely a proof that he is a buffoon since he thinks that the Ciceronians are, like himself, forced to live in hovels in which the crannies have to be stopped up. Surely, thinks Scaliger, Erasmus lived long enough in Italy to notice how well constructed the walls are. But, as usual, he measures everyone else's mode of living by his own. Another lie is that the Ciceronians use astrology to find the hour propitious for work. As if every hour when one has leisure is not eagerly seized. Erasmus surely doesn't expect anyone to believe that the human race is so stupid that a member of it would spend three to seven days on a simple letter.²⁵ The worst thing about these silly fables is that Erasmus thinks that learned men have nothing better to do than to listen to such nonsense.²⁶

Scaliger returns to his attack on Erasmus' morals. First he had chided him with having been ungrateful enough to blame Aldus for lack of liberality when the servants did not bring him enough wine. Actually, they refused him drink only to keep him from going to sleep. Scaliger now continues in this vein:

Although, when reading proof at house of Aldus, you did the work of only half a man, yet in drinking you were the threefold Geryon, saying that you were following the example of Plato who wrote that wine stimulates genius; now you say of Ennius as if you speaking of some glutton, that his verses smell of wine. Yet, Scipio as great a general and orator as he was, sober and moderate as a citizen, admired these verses. The divine Virgil from these verses took the auspices of his own majestic poetry. You reject Ennius, you say Horace is a drunkard, you remove Cicero from the memory of men. I implore you, good Romulus, or if you prefer, Camillus, what empire or what republic of letters are you founding, or what ruins are you restoring?²⁷

Scaliger is greatly annoyed by the strictures of Erasmus against the slowness of composition characteristic of the Ciceronians. Erasmus' thrust that it takes a Ciceronian a whole night to write a sentence is given the lie by Scaliger. He feels, quite properly, that Erasmus is by implication praising his own Latin style

in contrast to that of the Ciceronians. Naturally, then, he turns his fire upon the *Colloquies*. He is shocked by those schoolmasters who put this book in the hands of their pupils and then forbid them to read Terence. Scaliger defends the ancient by giving Erasmus' book a severe and searching critique. He then goes back to his main subject, the defense of Cicero. He praises at length Cicero's style and everything that goes to make it up. He praises his puns, and goes so far as to declare that Cicero is the most precise of writers.

To Erasmus' objection that one cannot be a true Ciceronian because some of the works of Cicero are lost,²⁸ Scaliger has the satisfaction of asking how, using Erasmus' logic, anyone can call himself a Christian since all of Jesus' activities are not recorded. Scaliger denies that some of the solecisms that Erasmus attributes to Cicero are solecisms. As for those that are, they can be explained as the errors of copyists. Erasmus can't criticize Cicero intelligently since he is unable to distinguish between his actual works and those falsely attributed to him.

Now Scaliger addresses the young students directly. He tells them that by this time they should be able to see what kind of an animal they have to deal with. And yet, although he has no more idea of what belongs to him than what belongs to others, Erasmus appoints himself Chief Justice of the Republic of Letters. He has the audacity to claim he is a true son of Cicero, of him whom he has just done his best to demolish. The executioner claims to be the son of his victim! How dares this parricide either to call father him whom he has assassinated, or assassinate a father he falsely claims? Scaliger works up a righteous anger at what he considers Erasmus' two-faced attitude. Erasmus uses the epithets *aridum*, *elumbem*, and *subinanem* for Cicero, and then pleases to call him divine. Of course, no one believes in the sincerity of this praise when it comes from the mouth of Erasmus. It is praising that would have meaning only in the mouths of learned men. Coming from Erasmus, it is rejected since we know that Erasmus lauds Cicero only as part of his plan to keep us from imitating him.²⁹

Since this oration is Scaliger's debut in the world of letters, he takes every opportunity given him to display his wide range of knowledge. Erasmus casually remarked that perfect imitation of Cicero is no more desirable than an excess of health since this excess will lead to illness.³⁰ Here is Scaliger's opportunity to give Erasmus a lecture on medicine. He says:

I see where you took this. I think it is from Hippocrates' *Aphorisms*. But, I shall make it as clear as day that you badly misunderstood them. Come, dear *Æsculapius*, do you know that Galen distinguished states of health? Do you know that according to him, some are healthy who are judged healthy now, others because they are healthy the

²⁴ Erasmus, 1908: 28.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

²⁶ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 20-26.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁸ Erasmus, 1908: 40.

²⁹ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 28-48.

³⁰ Erasmus. 1908: 55.

greater part of their lives, others because they seem to be always healthy? But, there are very few that he calls completely healthy. Which category do you want to belong to? Can you deny that the state of those who are completely healthy is the best? Yet, you did not want to be in this state always. In spite of the authority of Galen, who says that a completely healthy man never falls ill, you had fear of becoming sick. As for that maxim of Hippocrates you instance, you should understand it in this way: there is no excess of health except there where, according to Galen, one finds health present. Accordingly, so that this excess does not pass into illness, it ought to be restrained by a dose, a bleeding, or a diet. O, Erasmus, what a shame for you, what a danger to your glory, to be taught by a young man, a rough orator, nay not even an orator, a *soldier*, an Italian, who above all else, wishes to be and to be named a Ciceronian!³¹

But, Erasmus has no right to become angry with Scaliger since the cause at issue is a public, not a private one. If he thinks that Scaliger has been a bit harsh, he should remember that Scaliger has seen the dreadful effects of Erasmus' poisoned darts on the Italians. While lecturing Erasmus, he makes an oblique reference to his own dynastic pretensions:

You order me to abstain from virtues because they are neighbors of the vices. O, Epicurus, do you prohibit liberality to well-born men because it might become prodigality? Do you put an end to courage because it might become rashness? Do you wish to dissuade me from recovering the domain of my ancestors because they ruled there with a strength that did not seem to differ much from tyranny?³²

Thus at one stroke Scaliger pretends to expose Erasmus' ignorance of medicine. Further, he reduces his logic to the absurd and shows that, following his principles, one would not be able to imitate the saints for fear of dissimulation, or relieve the poor for fear of ostentation. He also, as we might expect, manages to bring out the fact that he, Scaliger, has followed the trade of arms and that he is of princely birth.

Erasmus charges that the Ciceronians indulge in stupid paraphrases in order to use the words Cicero did, using such terms as *Consul*, *Senate*, and *Forum* although the Roman Empire has passed away.³³ Scaliger defends his friends by an appeal to Cicero himself. Did he not call the Roman people, *Sabine shepherds*, the *Senate*, *Areopagus*, and *Caesar*, *Alexander of Macedonia*? To Erasmus' reproach that a pure Ciceronian will not use the name of Jesus since it is not found in Cicero,³⁴ Scaliger has two replies. First, it is not true. Second, it would have been better for Erasmus if the idea of not using this sacred name had come to him. If it had, he would not have introduced the Lord as a companion of drunkards in his *Praise of Folly*.³⁵ This must have struck home since we are told

that Erasmus regretted the introduction of Jesus into his satire.

On the subject of imitation, Scaliger feels that Erasmus gives such contradictory advice that he makes little sense. Erasmus says that one should not imitate Cicero, but emulate him; thus one might hope to surpass him. But in another place he says one should not imitate Cicero because one could not hope to attain his height. How, asks Scaliger quite reasonably, can one surpass a man to whose height one cannot attain? Sometimes Erasmus says one should not imitate Cicero at all; sometimes he recommends that one imitate only the best in Cicero, and then contradicts himself by saying that all imitation is bad. Well, says Scaliger, after comparing Cicero and Erasmus, Erasmus has equalled Cicero in one thing anyway. He has had as many books written against him as Cicero had.³⁶

Although on this question of imitation the modern world would decide in favor of Erasmus, it would be wrong not to recognize that something may be said for Scaliger and the Ciceronians. Latin was an artificial tongue for the humanists. To get rid of the barbarisms which had crept into the language in the Middle Ages, one had to imitate the ancients since it was only by this method that one could distinguish between classical and late Latin. This necessity existing, it was reasonable to pick one great author, Cicero, and imitate him. It made a good classical style possible of attainment in a lifetime. If the field of imitation had not been thus deliberately restricted, would the Ciceronians have attained the classical purity of style they did?

Whether from jealousy of Budé, who was the leader in this new science, or from ignorance of its true value, Erasmus had in his discussion of imitation attacked the study of ancient coins, medals, and inscriptions.³⁷ This slip gave Scaliger a chance not only to show his own knowledge of the subject but to administer a well-deserved rebuke to his opponent. The value of the science of archeology was at issue.

For Scaliger, Erasmus' attitude is that of a foolish rustic. He declares that his own study of coins has been as valuable to him as his study of books. The coins of the emperors have given him more exact knowledge of their deeds and their customs. If Erasmus scorns medals he also has to proscribe the new literature which has been written to explain them. While Erasmus admires with the eye of a dilettante the grave proportions of a vase, Scaliger and his confreres will be getting the flower of history from medallic inscriptions. And as for Erasmus' saying he prefers to those inscriptions and pagan images the sign of the cross, Scaliger can answer that no one can question his admiration for this holy sign. Did not his own uncles die for its glory in Messenia and Euboea?³⁸

³¹ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 50.

³² *Ibid.*, 51.

³³ Erasmus, 1908: 61.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁵ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 52-54.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 54 ff.

³⁷ Erasmus, 1908: 74-75.

³⁸ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 1*: 58-59.

Nor can Scaliger understand Erasmus' refusal to study the inscriptions on monuments. How can a man turn his eyes away from an inscribed stone that has survived the ravages of time and talked to men throughout the centuries?

For himself, says Scaliger, the tombs of the ancients are the living stuff of history. Did not the very sight of the monument erected at Marathon make the Greeks burn to serve their country like the heroes who died there? The Greeks had eulogies delivered every year for the illustrious dead whose epitaphs all citizens had read, the children of those who died in battle were educated at the public expense, the parents of the dead heroes were given the best seats in the theater, and statues of heroes were raised in every public place. What were all these things if not to excite the public to emulate great deeds? These are the truly popular books.

For all do not have the leisure that is yours, Erasmus; nor can everyone be as idle as you are every day, profiting by the conversation of friends and the reading of books. Leave, I pray you, to us rough soldiers our reading, that is to say, our gazing at statues, our viewing of medals, and our perusing of inscriptions.³⁹

The only exception Scaliger makes to his defense of medals and statues is the statue of Priapus and so loath is he to give anything of the ancients up that he feels even this may be admitted if young people are kept away from it.⁴⁰

After a brief summary of some additional points he finds objections to in Erasmus' work, he closes his first oration with a plea to the young scholars to whom it is addressed:

I implore you, most kind and learned young men, if you were ever desirous of solid glory, if you were ever the enemies of arrogance, envy and vanity; I entreat you by your virtues and by the virtues of those who obtained your seats for their successors, by the hope that one now at last awaits from the renaissance of eloquence, to take care that it does not sink back to the ground because of your negligence. You must not only destroy the effrontery of the calumniator but take away from others the desire to imitate him.⁴¹

Scaliger then goes on to warn the young men that if they do not take action to rescue the memory of Cicero from the sharp railleries of slanderous Erasmus; he, wicked beast that he is, will turn his mad rage against them and others sooner or later. His appeal ends:

Repel the intemperance of this man, repulse his injustices, shatter his audacity, erase his nefarious decrees, so that Latin letters will owe more to you for having preserved the one and only Cicero than they owe to Cicero himself. No longer being able to defend himself against an impure man and full of confidence in your benignity and humanity, Cicero commends both himself and his eloquence to you, the hope and strength of good letters.⁴²

That Scaliger's attack on Erasmus is stronger than our modern taste can stomach cannot be denied, but it is no stronger than attacks Erasmus himself made against his enemies and, in the case of the Aldi, even his friends. Even a cursory reading of sixteenth-century polemics shows that their standards are not ours, and that when a writer called another writer all of the foul names he could think of it meant little more than that he disagreed with him. Invective was a form of art and the writer who could string one insult after another in passable Latin was merely demonstrating his mastery of that art.

The decorum of literary controversy in the Renaissance was not what it is today. One of the signs of the flourishing individualism of this period is that wagers of literary controversies attack the characters of their opponents as well as their ideas.⁴³ In order to protect Scaliger from the imputation of being unusually rude one has only to examine the etiquette of other controversies. Perhaps the most famous polemics in the fifteenth century were exchanged between Filelfo and Poggio because Filelfo attacked the Florentines and Poggio felt called upon to defend them. A taste of the invectives they exchanged may be obtained from this English translation of a portion of one of Filelfo's poems against Poggio:

Fain wouldest thou Poggio pour the torrent of thine ire
From lips that glow with all a Tully's fire;
But, thy weak nerves by stale debauch unstrung,
Thy half-formed accents tremble on thy tongue.
Of filth enamoured, like a hideous swine,
Daily thou wallowest in a sea of wine.
Earth, air, and ocean join their ample store,
To cram thy maw, that ceaseless craves for more;
And, worse than beast! to raise thy deaden'd gust
In nature's spite thou satest thy monstrous lust.
Black lists of crimes! but not enough to fill
Poggio, thy ample register of ill.
Like some black viper, whose pestiferous breath
Spreads through the ambient air the seeds of death,
Obscure and still thou wind'st thy crooked way,
And unsuspecting virtue falls thy prey.⁴⁴

Poggio's reply to this was in a prose which equals in scurrility, if it falls short in polish, his enemy's verse. He addresses Filelfo as follows:

Thou stinking he-goat! thou horned monster! thou malevolent detractor! thou father of lies and author of discord! May the divine vengeance destroy thee as an enemy of the virtuous, a parricide who endeavourest to ruin the wise and good by lies and slanders, and the most false and foul imputations. If thou must be contumelious, write thy satires against the suitors of thy wife—discharge the putridity of thy stomach upon those who adorn thy forehead with horns.⁴⁵

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.
⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.
⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 69.
⁴² *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴³ "The medieval scholar tended to hide his own contributions behind tradition in order to afford them its sanction. But now in a society with a heightened consciousness of the self and of property, matters of the mind too were affected by the idea of private property, bringing with it egoism and personal feelings, jealousy and rancour." Alfred von Martin, 1944: 31.

⁴⁴ William Shepherd, 1837: 250-251.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 252.

To those who might object such lack of decency was of a generation prior to Scaliger, I am sure that a reading of the insults that passed between Castelvetro and Caro as a result of the former having unfavorably criticized a poem of the latter's would show this not to be so. Caro and his friends not only used violent language against Castelvetro but were the ones, in all probability, who denounced him to the Inquisition. Nor does the controversy which began in 1587 between Guarini and Jason de Nores on the subject of tragic-comedy show any slackening in the desire to inflict personal insult on one's opposite. Scaliger was far from the worst of offenders.

Recognizing this we are not as angry at Erasmus being called a parricide, a calumniator, a drunkard, and a spiteful liar as we might be otherwise. Scaliger was not writing a polite essay, he was writing an *oration* and he conceived his duty to be the same as that of a prosecuting attorney, and he naturally spent more time on a weak point of Erasmus such as his undermining of Cicero's character than he did on stronger ones. He used every weapon and argument that came to hand. If we cannot feel at all times that he is being perfectly fair to Erasmus, we can appreciate the many points he scores against his great opponent. If his position is one-sided, it need not shock us. It was meant to be.

After saying everything we can against this oration, we must admit that many debutants in letters have made a worse showing than did Julius Caesar Scaliger. He not only dared attack the dictator of letters but he was able to attack so effectively that Erasmus admittedly felt the smart. And, all of this was done in a Latin that, though it might not have been as purely Ciceronian as its writer thought, showed that Scaliger had the ability to use the ancient tongue with a verse and control that many of his contemporaries could have envied.

VII. FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

The highest rank a citizen of Agen could obtain was that of Consul, a municipal title that had a proud four hundred years' history.¹ Aside from the honor of being one of these officials, a real material advantage accrued to those elected. Consuls were free of *la taille* (royal tax) the year of their consulate. In 1532 Scaliger was elected to this position, a fact which does not tally with those pictures of him given by some writers as a harsh, unpopular figure. A warmer feeling than mere respect must have existed in the breasts of the electorate. Further, Scaliger performed his office so much to their satisfaction, that he was reelected the following year. In his first year in office, Agen was in the grip of a plague. Scaliger left the city with his family and retired to his country estate.² At first glance this looked as if Scaliger was avoiding his duties as a magistrate

¹ P. Courteault says the administration of Consuls was established in Agen before 1196 (1938: 150).

² M. O. Fallières and Canon Durengues, 1913, document 32, p. 299.

in the same way as Montaigne did when he fled Bordeaux in time of plague though he was the mayor of the city.³

Actually, the situations are not comparable. Though certain officials of Agen were required to stay in the city at all times, the consuls were not.⁴ Yet, though we might defend him from the charge of deserting his civic post, we would feel he forgot his duties as a doctor if we did not know that the responsibilities of a medical man were subject to official rules in sixteenth-century Agen. Such responsibilities as staying in the city to look after plague-struck victims were officially assigned by the city to certain doctors. If a doctor was not one of these, he could feel free to leave.

This is clearly seen in a demand to be exempted from *la taille* which Scaliger addresses to the Consuls of Agen in March, 1534. Scaliger complains that the tax-collector has called on him and presented demands; this in spite of the fact that Scaliger has hitherto been exempted from paying the tax because of services he renders the city. If the present consuls also allow him to go tax free he promises to take care of the inhabitants in time of plague, to care for lepers, and to give his services free to the poor and to charge all others according to the ordonnance of the consuls. The consuls accepted these conditions and exempted him from the tax.⁵

Naturally Scaliger did not have to pay the tax when he was consul, but it was well not to have to pay it at other times, too, since it was a social stigma to be among those taxed.⁶ This petition also shows us how well regulated the duties of a physician were by the civic authorities. Think of how shocked the present American Medical Association would be to have fees regulated by the state. In the archives of Agen we see that the consuls held Scaliger to his promises. On July 25, 1538 he and surgeon Leroux are appointed to examine a woman with leprosy.⁷

Scaliger did not have to be reminded by the consuls to give his services free to the poor. His son gives us

³ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁴ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Consuls*.

⁵ Archives départementales d'Agen, BB., no. 5, f° 96. J. Momméja argues that since Scaliger had hitherto been exempt from the tax it was his responsibility to stay in Agen and that if he left it was because he was ill himself (1908: 312-314). True, Scaliger made his will at this time but that does not prove he was ill. It proves only that he was in great danger as was everyone else. Though we know Scaliger had official medical duties at this period we do not know, in spite of Momméja's argument, what they were.

⁶ See his poem "De Se," *Poemata*, 1: 384, 1600, where he complains of having *serviley* to pay the tax. Since I cannot date the composition of this poem, I do not know whether it was written before Scaliger's petition was granted or whether it dates from 1549 when the collector again demanded that Scaliger pay the tax. At this time he was supported by the Queen of Navarre who wrote a strong letter to the consuls demanding that Scaliger be exempted (Archives d'Agen, BB. no. 27, f° 132).

⁷ Archives d'Agen, BB. no. 21, f° 155.

a picture of his charitable duties that makes us wonder how he found time to do his literary work. He writes:

[My father's] piety was really remarkable, but his charity towards the poor was more so. Toward the end of autumn, he bought large rolls of material with which he clothed the poor people, keeping them from the cold of winter. He gave away food and then he called us boys and told us how the poor were our brothers, and how we should give them our brotherly friendship, after which he made us take them by the hand and conduct them to the butler. Even when he was sick, he received the poor in his own house, took care of them zealously, gave of his own pocket and undertook to pay the pharmacists and the surgeons. One would have said that his home belonged to everyone. Every day, so many people of high rank as well as people of average and low condition came that it often happened, if my memory is right, that he hardly had time to eat. How many people he saved from the grave, I cannot say, but if he had lived in the time of the ancient heroes, he would have been more honored than *Æsculapius*.⁸

Meanwhile Scaliger has become interested in a controversy that was raging in Toulouse. At the University of that city the students of different "nations" formed societies whose turbulence was such that they were a great cause of annoyance to the Parliament. There were the Spaniards, the Germans, the Aquitains, the Gascons, and the French. The last two were the most bitter toward each other. Each society had a patron saint and on his feast day it was the custom for an orator, chosen from its membership, to give a speech which reviewed the events of the previous year that had affected the society. For the meeting of October 9, 1533, Etienne Dolet,⁹ a law student, later to become famous as a printer and a "martyr of the Renaissance," was chosen to speak. His oration concerned itself with three main points. An attack on the Parliament of Toulouse for having attempted to abolish the societies by edict, a defence of humanism against the barbarism of Toulouse, and a violent attack on the Gascons and other southern nations.¹⁰

It was this last which aroused the audience the most. The French cheered and the Gascons were infuriated. When Dolet had finished, a Gascon, called in Latin Petrus Pinachius,¹¹ the orator for the Gascons, rose to reply. He answered Dolet vigorously and accused him of impairing the dignity of the Parliament of Bordeaux, and of being a heretic. Then he launched into praise of the Gascons and vilification of the French.

Dolet answered Pinachius in a second oration even more violent than the first. The Gascon seems to have been a good enough orator to make many telling points, for Dolet is obviously enraged against him. He attacks the person of his antagonist and the Parliament of Toulouse, as well as the Gascons. What insults he

⁸ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 46.

⁹ Richard Copley Christie, 1880, contains a full account of Dolet's part in this controversy (pp. 85 ff.).

¹⁰ John Charles Dawson, 1923: 156.

¹¹ His name is variously given as Pinaqui, Prignac, and Pinache.

failed to throw at the southerners in his first oration he uses here.

Dolet, in this struggle, was anxious to obtain the credit of friendship with Scaliger, using Arnoul Le Ferron as go-between. This Le Ferron, though much younger than Scaliger, was his greatest friend. More of Scaliger's letters are addressed to him than to any other person. In these letters Scaliger gives Le Ferron the name of Cicero's dear friend Atticus and Le Ferron calls Scaliger Marcus in memory of Cicero. The first bond between the two men was that Arnoul's father, Jean Le Ferron, was from Verona where he had some reputation as a lawyer. Like Scaliger he had immigrated to France in the train of a great churchman. But Arnoul had more than his birth to recommend him to Scaliger. He was a genuinely learned young man and one of the intellectual stars of Bordeaux. In 1536 he was appointed a councillor of the Parliament of Bordeaux though he was only twenty-one and the age limit was twenty-five. It was not long before he showed his intellectual distinction in two works, one on the customs of Bordeaux and the other a continuation of the history of Paulus *Æmilius*.

In letters which passed between Dolet and Le Ferron toward the end of January, 1534, Dolet's desire to be well thought of by Scaliger is apparent. Le Ferron writes to Dolet:

I am on terms of great intimacy with Julius Caesar Scaliger, a most accomplished man and devoted to all kinds of liberal culture. We have so many grounds of friendship that you would hardly find any persons more intimate than we are. In reply to a letter in which I made mention of your singular erudition, eloquence and culture, he wrote most pleasantly and gracefully that he had as great an esteem for you as I had, and that he had already heard of your eloquence; and although he is a man exceedingly averse to ingratiating himself with others, he specially desired me to salute you in his name. I do this most gladly, as well as on account of the message itself, as in order to perform that duty to him which he imposed on me in his letter. I think you will highly esteem his learning, for he is of the number of your Ciceronians, and well known to the learned from the oration which he has published in defence of M. Tullius against Erasmus of Rotterdam.¹²

Etienne Dolet replies:

That you should take the trouble of writing to me is, in the first place, agreeable to me, and I am greatly pleased by your extreme good will. That Julius Caesar Scaliger has by your means become friendly to me is something for which I confess I am greatly indebted to you, and if I do not immediately requite so great kindness I shall yet strive by my thanks to imitate your friendly disposition. I beg you to be persuaded of this, that you have conferred a favour on one who will remember it, and to understand that I shall spare no pains if there is anything you wish for in which I can be of service to you. . . . Of my good will to Caesar Scaliger in return for his to me, I shall not write you at length; this only I ask of you, first to bear in mind yourself, then to strive to persuade Scaliger, that there is no one for whom I have a greater regard or a higher opin-

¹² Quoted by Christie, 1880: 122-123.

ion. You will salute him for me, and will without hesitation offer him my services.¹³

Dolet was not to gain Scaliger's friendship. First, he made the mistake, as we shall see later, of competing with Scaliger in the matter of the Ciceronians. Secondly, in any fight between the Gascons and the French, Scaliger would be likely to be found on the side of his wife's countrymen.

However, the most important factor was probably the visit that Pinachius paid to Scaliger in order to gain his support. While Dolet was content to rely on Le Ferron (who, by the way, increasingly disapproved of Dolet's violence against the Gascons) Pinachius went in person to Scaliger and soon gained his support. Le Ferron's attempt to bring Dolet and Scaliger into friendly relations was without success.

The Dolet-Pinachius feud was interesting but Scaliger's main interest was still Erasmus and he was awaiting his reply with impatience.

There can be little doubt that Scaliger made his dialogue as strong as it was in hopes of irritating Erasmus enough to enter into a controversy with him. Alas for his hopes. Erasmus didn't even believe Scaliger had written it! Erasmus, having never heard of the J. C. Scaliger on the title page and being by this time very suspicious, believed that someone he knew well had composed this oration. He was further convinced of this by the references the oration made to his mode of living at Venice. So many details were given that they must, he conjectured, have come from a personal acquaintance. Erasmus' suspicions fell on Jerome Aleander whom he had met at Venice and with whom he was friendly at that time. Some time after this, at the height of the Luther controversy when Aleander was the Pope's legate, Erasmus, who was beginning to feel real fear because of the way his name was linked with Luther's, wrote:

I hear they are now using poison, and at Paris some who were open defenders of Luther were suddenly put out of the way. . . . This is an art in which Aleander had great skill. At Cologne he used very earnestly to invite me to breakfast; but the more he pressed, the more persistent was I in excusing myself.¹⁴

Erasmus was sure he recognized the style of Aleander and wrote on May 3, 1532, "I know Aleander inside and out and am as sure that it is his as I am of my own existence."¹⁵ This is more angry than convincing since Erasmus had also attributed Scaliger's oration to Beda and Julio Camillo.

Aleander was shocked when Erasmus wrote him of his suspicions and answered in at least four letters in which he denied the charge and asked for a renewal of their old friendship. This did not convince Erasmus, however. He was still certain that Aleander was the

villain when a letter dated November 30, 1532, was sent to him by a person unknown to him named François Rabelais.

The occasion for this letter was not the Ciceronian controversy alone. Erasmus was editing Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* in Latin and needed a manuscript of the Greek text. Rabelais heard of the famous scholar's need and borrowed one for him from the Bishop of Rhodes (Rodez), Georges d'Armagnac. This letter joyfully tells of the service Rabelais is able to render. That he is able to identify Erasmus' opponent in the course of the letter must have been pleasant especially as it gave him the opportunity of smearing his former acquaintance. He calls Scaliger "godless," a term, which though very loosely used, embodied a violent attack indeed in those days when such an accusation could send a man to the stake if it reached certain ears. Here is the letter:

A Loving Greeting in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Georges d'Armagnac, the most illustrious bishop of Rodez sent me recently *The Jewish History on the Capture [of Jerusalem]* by Flavius Josephus, and asked me, as our long-standing friendship demanded, if ever I found a trustworthy person who was going in your direction, to see that it was restored to you at the first opportunity. I therefore gladly seized this means and opportunity of making known to you, my most kindly father, by some pleasing duty, what feelings of affection I cherish towards you. I styled you my father; I ought also to say Mother, if your indulgence would allow it. For that which we daily find occurring with those who bear children in their womb, that they nurture offspring which they have never seen, and protect them from the inclemency of the surrounding air, that very affection you have shown, in that you have educated me although unknown to you in face, unknown also by name, and have ever fostered me with the purest stores of your divine learning, so that as to all that I am and all that I am worth, did I not put it down as due to you alone, I should be the most thankless of all men living, and of those that shall hereafter be. So I send greeting again and again, my most loving Father, father and glory of your country, defender and protector of literature, and most invincible champion of truth.

I lately learned from Hilary Bertulph, with whom I am on the most friendly terms, that you are taking some steps or other against the calumnies of Jerome Aleander, whom you suspect of having written against you under the mask of a certain counterfeit Scaliger. I cannot allow you to be longer in suspense and to be in error through this suspicion of yours. For indeed it is Scaliger himself of Verona, living in exile, one of the exiled family of Scaligers. At the present time he is practising as a physician at Agen. The man is well known to me, not indeed favourably. In fact he is a slanderer who, to speak generally, is not without knowledge in medical matters, but in other points utterly godless, as no man ever was. It has not happened to me to see his book, nor has any copy of it been brought here in all these months. I suppose it has been suppressed by those in Paris who wish you well.

Farewell and continue in prosperity.

Yours, in so far as my own,

Fr. Rabelais, physician¹⁶

¹³ *Ibid.*, 123-124.

¹⁴ Quoted by Mangan, 1927: 2: 192.

¹⁵ Quoted by Christie, 1880: 195. Erasmus may have suspected Aleander because of the slighting remarks he made about him in the *Ciceronianus* (pp. 99-100).

¹⁶ This letter, for long thought to have been addressed to B. de Salignac, is now known to have been written to Erasmus. It may be found in De Santi, 1905: 39-41, and in most modern editions and biographies of Rabelais.

Although this letter did not convince Erasmus that Scaliger was the one who attacked him, it does offer proof of the unfriendly character of the relations between Rabelais and Scaliger and helps explain the bitterness Scaliger felt toward him. It is interesting to note, also, that Rabelais must have felt Scaliger's descent from the Della Scala's was not to be questioned or as an enemy he would have certainly done so.

Scaliger, up to this time, had the mortification of having heard nothing from Erasmus. He could not carry on a polemic war if his opponent would not respond. It happened, however, that Erasmus could not hold his tongue and wrote to his friends P. Merebelius and J. B. Laurentia on March 18, 1535:

I think it best to ignore the absurdities of these youths, whose violence tends to destroy learning as that of the heretics subverts religion; for their praises make the humanities inhumanities, and the Muses Furies. The book you sent me I received some years ago. In it I see nothing pertaining to me. If they make me the enemy of Cicero they err as widely as possible. Now they say that at Lyons Etienne Dolet has published a sour book against me. . . . Julius Caesar Scaliger has published at Paris an oration against me stuffed with the most impudent lies and the most furious reviling, although I am sure from many certain arguments that he is not author of it. . . . I have no desire to strive with such enemies, nor do I think it expedient, and I hope you will not answer them. They seek antagonists.¹⁷

If Erasmus really had no desire to strive with Scaliger he should never have written this letter since the persons to whom it was addressed, who were seemingly gentlemen who enjoyed stirring up feuds, sent it to Scaliger without a word of explanation or sympathy. Angered, Scaliger set about the composition of his second discourse but still willing to be reconciled with Erasmus as we can see from a letter he wrote to a mutual friend, Omphalius, on May 4, 1536.¹⁸ It looks from this letter that if Scaliger had been able to receive one word from Erasmus he would have been willing to drop the controversy. He was never sent that word; though, indeed, he had no reason to expect it.

The work of Dolet which Erasmus mentions in his letter appeared early in 1535 and was entitled *A Dialogue Concerning the Imitation of Cicero in Defence of Christopher Longolius against Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam*. The dialogue is in the form of a conversation which is presumed to have taken place at Padua between Sir Thomas More and Simon Villanovanus at the time that Dolet was at the University. Although of course More never visited Italy, Dolet's choice of him as the spokesman for Erasmus is a good one although naturally the author sees to it that he is bested in the argument. The tone of the dialogue can be seen by quoting a passage from the prefatory letter:

The trivial crowd of grammarians who worship Erasmus as a deity, and place him before Cicero, will scarcely refrain

¹⁷ Quoted by Preserved Smith, 1923: 314. It is printed in Scaliger's *Oratio 2: 7-8*.

¹⁸ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Epistolae*, letter 17.

from attacks upon me. Moreover I do not doubt that the old man (who is almost childish with age) will ridicule the young man with his usual and persistent scurrility. But nothing troubles me less than the scurrility of a buffoon, nor do I fear any sharper bite from the toothless old food-for-worms while as to those who may accuse me of insolence, and may cover me with reproaches because I attack Erasmus, let them in the first place consider in what way they can defend Erasmus himself from the charge of insolence and scurrility in venturing to ridicule Cicero and those who strive to imitate him.¹⁹

This dialogue, though Erasmus attributed it, too, to Aleander, had considerable success and attained a wide enough reputation to make even Melanchthon declare that for the sake of Erasmus' reputation it ought to be answered.²⁰ This success of a rival answer to Erasmus might have been overlooked by Scaliger if he had been on good terms with Dolet. He was not, because of both the Gascon-French controversy and another matter. Earlier Dolet had published for the purpose of self-advertisement a series of letters that had passed between him and certain correspondents. Among the letters were three from Arnoul Le Ferron, who had expressed himself with a freedom he would never have allowed himself in those dangerous times if he had thought his words would be published. Further, he had carefully requested Dolet to keep his letters secret. This break of faith on Dolet's part could well have resulted in his friend being put in mortal peril. To add to Dolet's perfidy is the circumstance that he actually rephrased certain passages in the letters to suit his own ideas.

Scaliger was shocked at the treatment his friend received and wrote Le Ferron expressing his indignation. Scaliger reminds Le Ferron that Dolet has already betrayed Le Ferron by publishing garbled versions of letters he received from him. Further, he tells his friend that Pinachius has visited him and told him the whole story. Pinachius, whom Scaliger finds courteous, eloquent, and learned, said that when Dolet was in trouble he had not only lent him money but had used his influence with the authorities to keep him out of prison.

Scaliger is completely won over to Pinachius' side and advises Le Ferron to disassociate himself from Dolet in a public manner. Otherwise the compliments which Scaliger has openly paid to Le Ferron will be discounted by those who know him to be a friend of Dolet's. There is at least a hint here that Scaliger feels that Le Ferron's friendship with Dolet casts a shadow on Scaliger's reputation.

Indeed, Scaliger appears to have been more annoyed than was Le Ferron himself, who seems to have made up with Dolet soon after. But Scaliger either would not forget, or used this misstep of Dolet as an excuse for treating him henceforth as an enemy. He has obtained a copy of Dolet's work and gives in this same letter his reactions to the dialogue.

¹⁹ Quoted by Christie, 1880: 197-198.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 203.

I suppose you have seen Dolet's dialogue against Erasmus. He was not ashamed, after my writings were in print, to steal everything from me by giving my oration another turn and decking it out with his tinsel. Therefore there appear the same extravagances as in his orations. The style is not quite so rugged, but for this he is in debt to another, so that his loquacity seems to be supported rather by other people's words collected and raked together, than by a connected argument. But you will say he praises Caesar. I agree that he does. For they say that you advised him to consult his reputation, he having already rashly and foolishly played upon my Italian name. You had acquainted him also with the fact that I was preparing a dialogue wherein I should expose his malicious temper and empty arrogance, his petulance and stupidity, his impropriety and loquacity, his raving expressions and impudence. If he cajoles me it is with design to divert me from my purpose, if he praises me it is in such a manner that he seems unwillingly to follow the judgment of other people rather than express his own. Wherefore I have endeavoured that both he and others may for the future repent of their rage and impudence. I hear he is a corrector of the press at Lyons. If it be true that he was concerned in correcting the books I bought which were lately printed by Gryphius, our very schoolboys have therein discovered faults for which he deserves a severe whipping. I have reprimanded him in this second oration, not by name indeed, but painted in such colors that he may be known by the very children of Toulouse.²¹

Scaliger's next letter to Le Ferron is cheerful in tone because his book of poems *Nemesis* has just been published. He considers it the one of his productions which most pleases him. Yet his pleasure in sharing his young fame with his friend is darkened because Le Ferron has not yet denounced Dolet. He points out to Le Ferron that he has agreed with Scaliger that Pinachius is a good man, that he is on the side of his country and against Dolet's attack on it, and yet he has done nothing. He urges him to speak out at once.²²

These remarks or others of a like nature must have come to Dolet's ears, for he attacked Scaliger in little iambic verses. Scaliger hastened to respond in a poem that not only sought to demolish Dolet's reputation as a poet but attempted to show him how such iambs (satires) should be composed.

Advance ! Advance ! Awake ! iambic verse ;
Attack, beat, seize, drag, kill and, then, disperse !
Behold in threatening hands my livid ire,
Around my tongue a twisted snake of fire.
Dolet, thought you that I, ferocious, rough,
Would not find strength to answer your vile stuff,
A sort of fodder, or a mushy paste
Without a pinch of salt to give it taste ?
I was exiled far from your mulieries—
More inept than an ass's fooleries ;
But now in anger I to you return
An enemy resolved to be more stern.
Dog, stand aside ! Or would you care to see
What men of taste think of your "poetry."
Here's what they say : "The fool's insane ;
Black smoke, no light or fire, streams from his brain.
A hollow man ; he is a rotten shell."

²¹ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Epistolae*, letter 14, and partially in *Epistolae*, 1600, letter 94.

²² *Epistolae*, 1600, letter 95.

But yet you claim that some men like you well.
O, imbecile, remember ancient lore :
"Dogs chase a cur to lick his running sore."²³

Dolet's personality offended so many of his contemporaries that he received more than his share of attacks like these. One of the mildest was written by Scaliger's friend, George Buchanan :

Doletus writes verses and wonders—ahem—
When there's nothing in *him*, that there's nothing in them.²⁴

This is only one of several poems of this period in which Scaliger berates Dolet. Arnoul Le Ferron was in a very embarrassing position since he was a friend of both men. He must, however, have been successful in appealing to Scaliger not to hurt his friend by blackening his friend's friend. For, in the second oration we do not find Dolet reprimanded as Scaliger has promised.

Scaliger had no reason to like Dolet but Bayle is probably not entirely wrong when he conjectures that Scaliger was not a little piqued at the young man for having felt that another oration against Erasmus was necessary after Scaliger had so well taken care of the defense of the Ciceronians. As Bayle says,

There are very few authors who like such a procedure. It is looked upon as an affected design, either to surpass the first champion, or to deprive him of the glory of being the only person who breaks a lance. It is even thought that he who interposes in the combat judges the cause has not been well defended, and stands in need of assistance.²⁵

As we have seen, it was the letter from Erasmus to Merebelius and Laurentia that put Scaliger to work composing his Second Oration, but it may be that Dolet's entry into the feud offered Scaliger an additional incentive to show that he had not exhausted his literary arsenal. Prefixed to this oration is a letter from Hubert Sussanneau who visited with Scaliger at Agen. From it we discover that some of the difficulty Scaliger experienced in getting his First Oration into print was present when it was a question of publishing this Second Oration. Sussanneau writes to Hubert de Pradine from Bordeaux June 5, 1536 that when he was last in Paris Charles Sevin suggested to him that he read Scaliger's second oration against Erasmus. As he read it he was delighted with its truth and the way in which, defending Cicero, it employed his style.

Later, he says, he visited Agen for the express purpose of seeing Scaliger. His visit was superlatively successful. Scaliger not only discoursed eloquently but with charm and helped him select a way of life suitable to his talents. Then Scaliger showed him his library, allowed him to browse in it and talked about his solution to medical problems. Never did he experience greater pleasure. Then, he tells us :

²³ *Poemata*, 1: 330-331, 1600.

²⁴ Translated by J. O. W. H., in *Notes and Queries*, August 3, 1850.

²⁵ Pierre Bayle, 1734-1741, article *Dolet*.

During the conversation, Scaliger inquired concerning his second oration against Erasmus. I said I had read it but only in manuscript. Upon this he cried out somewhat angrily: "O friends, if I have any anywhere, that writing should have been published some time ago, it having been sent for that purpose to Paris several months ago. Yet, I seldom hear anything from it because of the length and peril of the way. I therefore conjure you by the muses, Sussanneau, if you have anyone at Paris on whom you can rely, to recommend to him to aid the printing in getting underway."²⁶

Sussanneau took this responsibility upon himself and asked his friend to carry out Scaliger's wishes. The oration was printed by Vidoue with his letter to Hubert de Pradine as a preface. It appeared near the close of 1536, though dated 1537 by a printer who allowed himself that unethical publishing practice that our magazine publishers still follow today.²⁷

Erasmus, who was to die July 12, 1536, heard that the oration was in Paris and wrote a friend on March 11: "Scaliger has again vomited a satirical piece against me, as has Peter Curtius. I have seen neither."²⁸ Since Erasmus was dead before this oration was published, Scaliger had the misfortune of seeing his angry oration in print at a time when Erasmus' death had made him regret the quarrel. Afterward, he often spoke of Erasmus with the greatest respect, wrote a laudatory epitaph for him and tore up a third oration against him he had in manuscript.

Naturally, we must read the second oration, not as an attack on a dead lion, but as it was written—another polemic against an Erasmus who was still alive and capable of giving as well as receiving blows.

VIII. SECOND ORATION AGAINST ERASMUS

Although shorter than the first discourse, Scaliger's second is no less worthy of our attention. When he wrote his first, he was defending his friends, his patrons and a cause he believed in. When he wrote his second he was defending himself. As a result we feel in reading it that the anger its pages reveal is a real and personal one. In the first discourse one can never get over the impression that Scaliger is using his rhetoric to win a case in court but that he is no more involved personally than a good actor who has a part to play.

Scaliger opens their second oration by thanking Merbelius and Laurentia for having, by sending him Erasmus' letter, allowed him a glimpse at Erasmus' true feelings. Scaliger can hardly keep his satisfaction from peeping through his lines. He realized that Erasmus' silence was the best answer to his attack and that

he, too, had to keep silence if he did not want to look foolish. But, now that Erasmus had picked up the gauntlet, Scaliger feels free to go ahead again. So, he ironically compliments Erasmus on his silence and admits that it was a dignified response to his oration. Erasmus showed himself too big a person to condescend to the little people who were jealous of his glory. Knowing that all readers have Erasmus' attack on Aldus and others in mind, he congratulates Erasmus on having never allowed himself to make invidious remarks about other people. How unfortunate are those over whom Erasmus passes in silence. Since their one hope of being noticed by posterity is a mention from Erasmus, they are doomed to eternal oblivion when he does not write their names.

This irony is successful because Scaliger is able to follow it with the remark that Erasmus was able to keep this generous silence for only four years. And when Erasmus breaks his silence he is as rude as Scaliger could wish. He calls Scaliger an impudent person, a liar, and a lunatic.¹

Scaliger now has freedom to answer these charges and answer them he does. He would resent being called such things by anyone but he is particularly annoyed that the words come from the mouth of a monster whose venomous tooth has slashed and poisoned the name of Christian. If he has lied where are the proofs? What witnesses can Erasmus bring forth? If he cannot satisfy the world with evidence, no one will believe him. Erasmus was charged with having not only attacked the eloquence of Cicero but his personal and bodily habits too. Is this a lie? Everyone knows that he did.

That Scaliger returned the compliment by making personal attacks on Erasmus is true, but did he ever lie? Take what he said about Erasmus' actions while in Italy. Was he telling a lie? Is it false that Erasmus earned his living by correcting proof for Aldus and that the errors in the editions of those days were less the fault of the printers than the drunkenness of Erasmus? Was it false that his senses were so upset by wine that what he wrote drunk he could not recognize sober? It was well known in Italy that the men who worked with Erasmus had to curse him to sober him up. Of course when Erasmus put his mind to it he could do two men's work in a day, but after doing this he would waste his time and money in taverns. So, Aldus gained nothing from his skill. Scaliger declares that all of these facts were told him by such worthy men as Giocondo, Dominius, and Aldus Manutius himself.²

After these additions to the history of Erasmus in Venice, which Erasmus certainly deserved after the *Opulentia Sordida* in which he betrayed the hospitality of his Italian friends, Scaliger begins speaking about

²⁶ *Ibid.*, article *Erasmus*.

²⁷ Caroline Ruutz-Rees argues that the date on the title page is correct and that the oration was published in 1537 after Erasmus' death (1913: 243-252). If true this puts Scaliger in an ungallant light. Yet against it we have the flat assertion of both Bayle and Christie that the oration was published in 1536.

²⁸ Erasmus, 1906-1947: 11: 297.

¹ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 2*: 9-10.

² *Ibid.*, 11-15.

his own exploits as a soldier. This seems highly irrelevant to a discussion about Cicero until we remember that Scaliger wrote to Arnoul Le Ferron that Erasmus had attempted to prevent the printing of Scaliger's first oration so that the glory he had acquired would not be dimmed by a "young, unknown man, a foreign soldier." Joseph Scaliger tells us that his father was particularly angry with Erasmus for having said that he was astonished that a soldier had attacked his book.³

In a lengthy discussion in his *Dictionary*, Pierre Bayle attempts to prove that this is an invention of Joseph and that Julius Caesar could not have been angry with Erasmus for this reason.⁴ Bayle's close reasoning on this matter is wasted because he is under the impression that this remark was supposed to have been made before Julius wrote his first oration, whereas, actually, as we see from Scaliger's letters and from this second oration, the epithet did not come into the discussion until after the first oration had been printed and was one of the reasons Scaliger wrote his second oration.

Bayle also expressed surprise that anyone could have thought that Scaliger, who took such care in his first oration to let the world know of his feats of arms, should have felt that he was injured by being called a soldier. First, we must remember that in *Oratio I* Scaliger recognizes the disdain in which the profession of arms is held and defends his audacity in taking up Erasmus' weapon, the pen, to combat him. Second, it has been suggested that Scaliger felt that the word *miles* was used by Erasmus as a contemptuous dismissal of Scaliger's boastings that would bring the *miles gloriosus*, the braggart soldier, of Plautus to everyone's mind.⁵ That this conjecture is sound may be seen by now looking at the passage in this oration where Scaliger defends his former profession.

He apologizes, not wanting to be considered a Rodomont, for having to mention his military exploits again. He then lists the battles, sieges, and hand-to-hand combats he has engaged in and calls to mind the famous captains he has served with—all this to convince his readers that he is no mere braggart but one who had actually been engaged in a strenuous military life. Knowing that many people like Erasmus might wonder that a man who had spent so much time on the battlefield could be learned enough to engage in a literary controversy, he defends the compatibility of the two professions:

The most honest trade of war, which raises mortals to the rank of the Gods, ought not to remove anyone from literary glory, since letters are often received and cherished in the bosom of the armies. Indeed, letters, less than anything else, have kept me from fighting at times with the greatest glory.⁶

Scaliger goes on to ask how the fact that he was a soldier can take away the glory he is winning in literature any more than literature detracted from his glory as a soldier. Further, in spite of Erasmus' scorn, Scaliger is confident that the custom of bearing up under heat, cold, hunger, and fatigue that he learned in the army was excellent training for the fight to grasp the laurels of literature.⁷

Scaliger's mixed feelings about having entered the career of letters so late are revealed in this part of his discourse. At one moment he seems to be envying Erasmus for having been able to devote his entire life to learned pursuits and at the next he claims that Erasmus by running the same race so long has lost the pristine vigor that Scaliger possesses. So now, while Erasmus employs his spare time in making fun of philosophers, poets, and orators, Scaliger devotes his to an intensive study of Aristotle, Plato, Virgil, Cicero, and others. While Erasmus sleeps off his overindulgence in wine, Scaliger is working hard at his books. While Erasmus drinks, Scaliger, possessed by the desire for literary glory, lets his dinner grow cold and with pale forehead and burning eyes forgets his hunger, his thirst, and his physical discomfort.

This difference in character, thinks Scaliger, is reflected in their attitude toward the Cicero question. Erasmus, who considers himself the older brother of Cicero, wishes to keep those who follow from sharing in the rich heritage. But Scaliger, whose spirit is more generous, calls upon all to share the fortune Cicero has left. It is no use for Erasmus to pretend he is not an enemy of Cicero by naming illustrious Ciceronians who are his friends. For, after the crime Erasmus has committed, it is their duty to revoke their friendship for him. To be sure, Erasmus took care to praise Bembo, Sadolet, and other Ciceronians but merely because he was afraid to go contrary to the universal opinion as to their merits. In the same way, after having abused Cicero, he praises him. Hearing him make these retractions, even his drinking companions turn their back on him.⁸

Let not Erasmus think that the silence of Bembo, Sadolet, and the others meant that they approved of his attacks on the Ciceronians. They were merely giving him the same silent treatment he gave Scaliger. The fact that Scaliger administers that correction of Erasmus that the other Ciceronians did not wish to undertake does not mean that Scaliger scorns Erasmus. Nor does it give Erasmus the right to hold Scaliger in contempt. But Erasmus—whose writings, if one permits them to go unanswered, will pull down both Christianity and the republic of letters—this madman calls Scaliger mad. Is it, asks Scaliger, because the epithets applied to Erasmus were not strong enough?

³ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Erasmus*.

⁴ Pierre Bayle, 1734-1741, article *Erasmus*.

⁵ De Santi, 1905: 3: 31.

⁶ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Oratio 2: 16*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 17-22.

I called him *dirt*; he has contaminated the springs of eloquence: He was named *executioner* and *parricide*; as everyone knows he named himself the offspring of Cicero and not only has he insulted, destroyed, torn into shreds, reviled and thrown around the name and memory of the father, not only of his country as Cato calls him, but of eloquence as all good men name him, but he has murdered the children of him whom he not only recognized as his father but named as such. Do you think, good people, that one sack such as parricides are sewn up in is enough for this one who has committed these parricides? O Triparricide! As our ancestors invented a new word and a new punishment for a crime of which Solon had not spoken, . . . so I have a right to coin a new word, a word unknown to Roman ears, for a new crime unheard of until the present. I mad? For, indeed, a Hercules was needed to exterminate their hydra. It is with certain monstrous natures as with furnaces which can only be extinguished by being inundated with water, since sprinkling them only makes them burn more fiercely.⁹

Thus, Scaliger, far from denying it, admits he is being violent with Erasmus but insists that the violence is necessary. At any rate Erasmus has no right to complain and Scaliger begs the more tender-hearted people to let him do the job that needs to be done and to purge the Chirons and the Busiris from the republic of letters. By the tender-hearted ones, Scaliger means those who have egged Erasmus on along his foolish course by their compliments and adulations. Whether they are at last horrified by Erasmus' madness, Scaliger knows not, but he begs them at least to allow to an honest man like himself what they found good in an impudent one. Are not Scaliger's own good qualities, especially his moderation, shown by the fact that he was twice chosen to administer an illustrious city?¹⁰ Scaliger does not feel that his past life as a commander of rough soldiers reflects on his honor. Certainly, it is not for a deserter like Erasmus to give him lessons in eloquence or anything else.

Erasmus' disdainful attitude toward Scaliger is based on the assumption that Scaliger has attacked Erasmus without provocation. But, asks Scaliger, is this true? Not at all. If one looks at the matter correctly one will see that Erasmus' proud and insolent attack on things Scaliger held dear was an attack on Scaliger. So it happened that,

Julius Caesar Scaliger, among the flower of the Italian nobility, was the first and only one who came to the aid of weakening eloquence. They say that Longus followed him; a certain Insubrian imitated him; and Dolet emulated him. I it was who, like another Aeneas, came as a fugitive to a remote part of the earth carrying to a more tyrannical sky my Penates and native Gods in spite of certain barbarians. Like another Marcellus, I first taught that one may conquer a more than Punic Hannibal, a renowned enemy of the Latins, not with his own tricks, but our own.¹¹

⁹ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24-25. A reference to Scaliger's having twice been Consul of Agen.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

Scaliger then gives the picture of his life and studies at Agen that I quoted elsewhere. In spite of the difficulties of scholarship in this provincial city, Scaliger feels he has not spent his time in vain and, if Erasmus considers him a mere child, Scaliger would like to have such a child as himself as pupil. Erasmus doesn't know how Scaliger has poured over the works of the ancients discovering new remedies they didn't know about and establishing the efficiency of many of their remedies that moderns sneer at. Nor does Erasmus realize that he, Scaliger, has recalled to the true principles of medical science not only all other physicians but Galen and Aristotle themselves. No more does Erasmus appreciate that Scaliger had written a discourse in which both Erasmus and Scaliger were painted in a true light but that Scaliger decided not to publish it on the advice of friends who convinced him it was more glorious to pardon than to punish. Further, since Scaliger had already won the victory, there seemed to be little reason to attack what was practically a dead body, his opponent.¹²

He then goes into a warm defense of the merits of his first oration. He follows this with complaints against Merbelius and Laurentia for having sent him Erasmus' letter without even adding a word of comment. If they thought by that to show their scorn for him they lost their pains because they did address it to Monsieur Scaliger at Agen and thus went against the rule of Erasmus' friends, which was never to mention the name of Scaliger, much less to write it. If on the other hand they sent it against Erasmus' wishes they were guilty of compromising their friend.

Scaliger had forgotten all about the dispute and no longer considered himself an enemy of Erasmus. Whether through fear, or some other reason, Erasmus had ceased to attack religion and acted more reasonably toward Cicero. Then, Scaliger received the fatal letter in which Erasmus attacked him, the defender of Cicero. Scaliger was forced to take up his pen again. He did this, he said, with regret since he had never provoked hatreds voluntarily and had smothered those he was able to. He had always been in search of friendships and had never been guilty of breaking them off.¹³

Then Scaliger ends his second oration with a claim that it would never have been written had not Erasmus begun the quarrel all over again. No doubt this is true, and though we might think that the insults in Erasmus' letter were small payment for those he had had heaped on his head by the first oration, Scaliger did not think so. His first oration was the defense of a cause. Erasmus had not answered it openly, but had sneered against the oration in a private letter to mutual friends and, worst of all, had said that he did not think that Scaliger had written it. From Scaliger's point of view, there was but one answer. He would write a second

¹² *Ibid.*, 38-39.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

oration that would by style and subject matter show that he was the author of the first. In this at least, he succeeded. The orations are evidently from the same hand and, after reading this second one, Europe would no longer have to ask who Julius Scaliger was. His name, his pretensions, were known.¹⁴

Soon after he had sent his second oration to the press, Scaliger wrote a letter to his good friend Le Feron which has become famous. It gives the key to the mystery of Erasmus' birth and parentage. Erasmus was deliberately vague and confusing about the circumstances of his birth since it was, given the prejudices of the age, discreditable to him. The official story which Erasmus gave to a friend, Conrad Goclen, in the *Compendium* is the one which is known to English readers by Reade's delightful reworking of it in his novel *The Cloister and the Hearth*. The story goes that Erasmus' father Gerard, a native of Gouda, a small town a dozen miles from Rotterdam, got with child a certain Margaret, the daughter of a doctor in neighboring Zevenberge. His parents had destined Gerard for the priesthood and so would not give their consent to his marriage. Margaret went to Rotterdam where she gave birth to Erasmus, and Gerard went to Rome, where he supported himself by copying manuscripts. While in Rome, Gerard received a letter from his parents telling him that Margaret had died. In despair, he became a priest. Later he returned home and discovered that his beloved Margaret was still alive. Too late. He had taken the vows from which there was no escape.

Unfortunately for Erasmus' credit, he reveals elsewhere that he had a brother Peter, three years his senior. Thus, his whole story is thrown out of joint and seems to be a fabrication designed to keep certain facts under cover.

Scaliger's letter gives information about Erasmus' background which best fits into the documented evidence we have. We must remember that Scaliger was particularly annoyed at having been accused of lying about Erasmus. He writes his friend that not only he did not lie but kept back from the world certain facts discreditable to his opponent. In the letter he thus addresses Erasmus:

Did I, in truth, lie because in that oration I did not venture, you groveling wretch, to call you a bastard? Although this was true, it was not certainly established; so it did not become me to publish what might have been a falsehood. Erasmus, you were then and are now a bastard. Thus many of my comrades in arms told me but I did not trust the rumors. Nor, did I throw it in your face lest the true and proven things I told about you might have been discredited. Now, however, your fellow countrymen and some of your neighbors who are men of character and distinction have told me that you are of inces-

¹⁴ Throughout the chapters on the Ciceronian question I was greatly aided by the summaries and translations of Nisard, 1860. Needless to say, however, I checked carefully with Scaliger's original letters and orations.

tuous birth and of sordid parents, your father being a priest and your mother a prostitute. Further, your father after having been punished several times for his disorderly life, and found incorrigible was finally banished from his country.¹⁵

This revelation of Scaliger that Erasmus is the son of a priest is commented upon by one of Erasmus' most recent biographers as follows:

This explains everything. No longer need we wonder at the reticence of Erasmus when we remember his numerous enemies, literary and theological, who could have been only too happy to curb that proud spirit with this choice bit of scandal. So Gerard's trip to Rome would have been taken in order to have his ecclesiastical censures removed; his failure to marry Margaret would be naturally due to his inability to marry her or any woman since he was in [priestly] orders; his return to his own country after having been restored to his privileges by the Roman curia and his fidelity to his vows ever afterwards—all these results would naturally follow his reconciliation with the church authorities. Then, too, the terms used by Leo X in freeing Erasmus from the disabilities which might in the future prevent him from holding benefices in the church point strongly in the same direction. The words that the Pope used are these: "*Ex illicito et, ut timet, incesto damnatoque coitu genitus.*" Here Erasmus had given his confidence to the Pope, who was a personal friend, and to whom presumably he had told the whole story, or as much of it as he had deemed absolutely necessary; and the Pope said that Erasmus feared, not only that he was illegitimate, as would follow from the word *illicito*, but also that he was born *incesto damnatoque coitu*, where the word *incesto* has its classical meaning of [this kind of] a violation of religious law, which would have been committed by his father if a priest, deacon, or subdeacon.¹⁶

About the time he wrote this letter Scaliger composed a third oration against Erasmus but he never published it, most likely for a reason which does him much credit. Erasmus had died. Even before this, Scaliger had demonstrated in a letter to a mutual friend, Omphalius, that he was anxious to make peace with his great opponent. Here is the letter:

Therefore, my Omphalius, since such is the extent of your kindness to me, you shall easily gain from me a favour which, on account of your innumerable excellences, you should spontaneously have received from me. Accept the freedom of my affection which you shall pass on to Erasmus. I intrust it to your care, so that out of it you may promise to whom you will that all is quieted, pacified, tranquil, affable, in fine, and even affectionate. I yield this to your kindness, to my own mildness, to the splendor of his name, to his esteemed learning, to his benefits towards the Republic of letters, to which he devoted his leisure and did not hesitate in the least to exchange his ease for the ease of the Republic. By this good nature let him indeed perceive that I stood aloof from him just to the extent that he seemed about to fail his defence of eloquence. I have, Omphalius, the same feeling for my candor that I had for my defense of Cicero, with as much justification and even more. And so I promise that all my counsels, all my strength, advantages, constancy, dignity, spirit and my very self shall be in your loyal charge and your power.

¹⁵ J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Epistolae*, letter 15.

¹⁶ J. J. Mangan, 1927: 1: 4-5.

But I beg you, Omphalius, who show me that so much good and peace awaits me in the Republic [of letters], look to it that, what I do by reason of your kindness and my own, I may not seem to have done through a kind of fear. For your evidence is very telling and weighty.

I shall consider it enough to have laid aside, on the heart of the most eloquent of men, a quarrel with an eloquent man undertaken in behalf of eloquence; especially since Erasmus himself has now at last taken off that mask fatal to eloquence and has repudiated his former view; wherefore you will see that the popular supporters of his way of thinking are fallen in spirit.

Indeed I always admired him as a man endowed with literary merits numerous and great; I reverenced his labours, vigils, works. For this reason I took it extremely ill that the principles of eloquence should be perverted by one whom I had really set up as a guide for myself when I was young, and in my old age had proposed to set up as such for my children . . . I, indeed, am supported by a clear and open conscience, and that I did what in a manner ought to have been done by Erasmus for himself, a thing which, in fact, partly undertaken by me, he at length accomplished so as to be reconciled with Cicero. For he bears witness to this in a recent letter affixed to the *Tusculanae quaestiones*. Therefore I consider that I have a sufficient share of praise and glory, not in that I routed so great a general but in that he followed my opinion.

And so, when with sudden good sense he either did away with or changed that proscription of the flowers of eloquence so disastrous to the Republic [of letters], he brought consolation to my good name, which was being impudently attacked by the outcries of light and shameless sciolists. . . . One thing remains, my Omphalius, that, our dissensions set aside and laid in the very lap of courteous sense, we should, as a result of your persuasion and exhortation to our reconciliation, put an end to our quarrel,—a quarrel which, undertaken from the very zeal of literature, may indeed easily defile its purity and reserve. Nor has that anger any bounds to which we are very easily moved when caught in our mistakes, and it grows by the daily incitement of party cries . . . as for him, what his disposition towards me may be I neither know nor am able to guess; except that I certainly think him to be hostile in the extreme. If this matter fans previous disagreements I easily yield. For nothing could befall me more glorious than to have kept back his attack from the Republic [of letters], nor anything more advantageous than, when he had become my enemy on account of it, to have surpassed him in good-will. Farewell, May 4th, Agen, 1536.¹⁷

In life Erasmus was an adversary one could attack with the assurance he was well able to take care of himself; in death he was a great man whose memory should be respected. This Scaliger realized and paid his tribute in verses dedicated to him in his *Heroes*. He declares therein that he who had never blenched in battles was stunned and terrified when he saw that the greatest of intelligences could die.¹⁸ Although in his later critical works he felt free to apply to him the critical standards he did to others, he seems to have genuinely regretted his acerbity toward the great man. Joseph says in his *Scaligeriana* that his father was sorry he had ever attacked Erasmus. He says that a great

man must make one mistake in his life and his father's was in attacking Erasmus.¹⁹ Joseph, himself, certainly deplored this episode. He bought up all the copies of the orations he could get his hands on as well as those copies of his father's letters in which Erasmus is unfavorably mentioned and left orders that they should be burned after his death. However, his labor was in vain since President de Maussac printed both the Orations and the letters in question at Toulouse in 1621.

IX. A WAR OF EPIGRAMS

No matter which way Scaliger turns he seems fated to bump into Rabelais. Scaliger is a "modern" and Rabelais an "ancient," as regards medical theory and practice. Rabelais, as we have seen, probably is a deserter from Scaliger's medical school and, as we know from documents preserved at Montpellier, studies under Scaliger's rival, Schyron. Scaliger writes against Erasmus; Rabelais writes a letter to Erasmus attacking Scaliger.

These are not trifling annoyances. Yet Rabelais adds to them by joining forces for a while (he later goes against him and attacks him harshly) with Scaliger's pet aversion, Étienne Dolet. At this Scaliger boils over in his favorite way—epigrammatically—and a literary war is on.¹

Whether it was started by Scaliger at this time or whether Rabelais had begun it before is not now possible to determine, but they both fought actively. Although only the epigrams of Scaliger have survived, they contain evidence that they were written in reply to others by Rabelais.

Aside from their differences as medical theorists and Rabelais' letter against Scaliger to Erasmus, there were other reasons for the dislike the two men took to each other. The fact that Rabelais wrote in the vernacular was one, though not an important one, since Scaliger, though he gave the palm to Latin writings, was not without appreciation for the French poems of the Pléiade. A stronger reason was that the two men represented different traditions. Rabelais wrote without great consciousness of being separated from the people. Their crude humor was his. He belonged to the older French tradition in which differences of class did not conceal similarities of taste, a tradition in which the rich bourgeois or man of robe used the same language and laughed at much the same things as his poorer neighbor.²

Scaliger was a leading representative of the new tradition which was beginning to refine the language and etiquette of the upper classes and which was to

¹⁷ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Erasmus*.

¹⁸ This chapter assumes De Santi's identification of Scaliger's "Baryaeus" with Rabelais which we have discussed elsewhere. If this identification is some day proved to be incorrect, this episode should still be of interest as containing examples of Scaliger's verse polemics.

² See Marcel Françon, 1947: 45–62.

¹⁷ I have borrowed the translation Caroline Ruutz-Rees gives (1913: 249–251).

¹⁸ *Poemata* 1: 301, 1600.

result in a more rigid stratification of French society. He was one of the group of men who helped make the classical period of French society possible.³

Scaliger amused himself by giving to Rabelais as he did to all the victims of his satires a nickname. The one he gave to Rabelais was Baryaenus, and under this name or its alternate Baraenus, Rabelais was hidden until he was brought to light by the searching scalpel of Dr. De Santi. De Santi changes Scaliger's spelling Baryaenus to Baryoenus in order to make the nickname mean heavy with wine—an allusion to Rabelais' love of the bottle. Such a change is difficult to justify since Scaliger distinguished between *ae* and *oe*. Further it is not necessary. For Baryaenus can mean praiser of the powerful—an even more appropriate epithet for the author of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

Fond of satirizing monks anyway, Scaliger was not the man to overlook the fact that Rabelais had twice been a religious. He writes: "When he became a monk, Baryaenus became dead to the world since the body of a monk is nothing. But now that he is an atheist he is truly dead both to the world and to God in both body and soul."⁴ Scaliger next amuses himself by pretending that his choice of words was hasty and adds: "I was wrong in saying that a monk is nothing because he is dead to the world. The dead fertilize our sterile fields with their corpses but a useless monk gnaws the fruits of our planting. Twice a monk and at last an atheist, you are able, Baryaenus, to be three times worse than yourself."⁵ This more than evens the slur, godless, that Rabelais cast at him in the letter to Erasmus. At least Scaliger has not twice thrown his monk's habit into the bushes. Rabelais seems to have attempted to give as good as he received since we find epigrams of Scaliger which talk of poems of Rabelais which overflow with bile and filthy rage.⁶

At about this point in this private war another poet proud of his epigrams decides to intervene. He calls himself Voulté, and he enters the fray with a poem in which he defends Rabelais' writings against such accusations. Voulté, whose real name was Jean Faciot, was originally from Rheims and was at this time a professor at the University of Toulouse. He was a great admirer of Scaliger, and in one of his epigrams places him above the original Julius Caesar.⁷ Yet this does not prevent him from attacking Scaliger in his epigram to Rabelais:

He who has asserted that your heart is savage, O Rabelais, has, truly, added salt to your Muse. I consider that he lied who said that your writings resounded with passion: Tell me, Rabelais, do you sing of madness? He was a

³ I discuss this fully in my *Renaissance literary criticism*, 1945.

⁴ *Poemata*, 1: 141, 1600.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 141.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 181-182.

⁷ Jean Voulté, 1537: 172.

Zoilus armed with mad iambics. But your writings breathe not anger but jokes.⁸

One can hardly take the arrows in these epigrammatic wars too seriously when we discover a man like Voulté firing both praise and blame at the same target. Indeed, rather than a war, we might call it a game, remembering that even in games men have their anger aroused from time to time.

Rabelais' poetical attacks on Scaliger were weak or Scaliger took care to weaken them before reporting them—probably the latter—if the attacks alluded to in the following poem by Scaliger are typical:

Baraenus says that Caesar neglects his business in order to give himself over to the study of literature. Caesar is a fool to abandon money-making for literature. For blood [surgery] even in second place, is money, and more when it in first place is alone searched for. However, it is neglected by Caesar's pride. Now who will consider him to be of sane mind who impoverishes himself in order to become pale—Such stuff with puffed cheeks does Baraenus sing at the cross roads and in the market place, followed by the corpse eaters Brucus and Syrus whose every word and act is for sale. But as Baraenus sings, behold all at once the whole market-place breaks out with happy bursts of laughter. But as soon as he sees Caesar the vain insolence of this Battal faints, while he with the same countenance with which he is wont to receive homage listens to these barbarous rantings. Unhappy Baraenus bursts with grief.⁹

Strange it is if the only insult that Rabelais could find to launch at Scaliger was that he was overfond of literature. If so, perhaps the pun on "blood" was too dear to be dropped; blood and gold were associated in popular lore. It is unfortunate that we see Rabelais' verses through Scaliger's eyes alone. The iambics (Scaliger's word for epigrams) Rabelais wrote were bitter enough, we can be sure, but we do not doubt they were much more witty than Scaliger would have us believe. He denies their literary quality and emphasizes their poisonous character in "Baraenus Sows Iambics and Is Attacked by Iambics."

When you made yourself a sower of iambics, disreputable fool, and when you threw into the open furrow your poisoned seed, a formidable harvest of horrible iambics sprang up. The heavy ears bend the light stalks and though your iambic is rotten, your grain holds itself up today, turgid, in the splendor of the earth. It is thus that destiny overcomes horrible disasters. The cruel harvest has killed its master and flourished because of his blood.¹⁰

A warning to prolific writers! Since these poems are undated, it is possible that this was written after Rabelais' death, but it is more probable—such was the custom—that he was giving Rabelais the thrill of read-

⁸ *Ibid.*, 60. Rabelais complains of Zoiluses full of envy and jealousy in the prologue to Book 5. Since the original Zoilus was famous for his attack on Homer and since Scaliger's denigrations of Homer were well known, Rabelais may have had Scaliger in mind.

⁹ *Poemata*, 1: 326-327. Page 326 is misnumbered 316 in my copy of the 1600 edition.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 202.

ing about Rabelais' impending extinction. In several others of his poems, Scaliger pays this compliment to men against whom he writes epigrams.

The portrait and family history of Rabelais that Scaliger gives are those that were long traditional among the anti-pantagruelians. Some of the features in later unsympathetic portrayals of Rabelais may well have been based on such sketches as the following:

On the Monk Baryaenus

Born of a butcher in the midst of the gruntings and blood of cattle, let him be good if he is able! If, as Ausonius writes, two poisons can counteract each other, perhaps a two-time monk may be able to be good. If he who as a child, young man, and old man, was kept by eating houses and a prostitute smelling of ulcers—if he who lacerated God and the world with curses is able to be good, the Hellhound himself is able to be.¹¹

Whether Scaliger invented these slanders or whether the life of Rabelais gave his contemporaries grounds for thinking like this we shall probably never know. Such private details are usually lost as soon as those who know them die. It would be manifestly unfair to accept this enemy's portrait of Rabelais, but we may conjecture that the drawing would have had little success unless it was recognizable at least as a caricature. Unless his victim had some reputation for evil living, another poem, "On the Monk Baraenus" would have hurt the author more than the subject. This poem paints "Baraenus" as so degenerate that he alone is able to be worse than his reputation—horrible as that is. In any contest as to viciousness "Baraenus" would be the only possible competitor for "Baraenus," for no human power earthly or divine could ever vanquish him in this contest. If nature created such a monster she has remained satisfied not to repeat; if she did not, he made his own nature.¹²

Seemingly his character shows in his swarthy complexion. Darkness and evil have always gone together. Scaliger plays with the conception that though he was able to throw away the black habit of the Benedictines, the somber color remains with him forever.¹³

Rabelais, as we shall see later, will not content himself with replies in Latin verse. He will use the powerful weapon he has fashioned from the mother tongue to strike back at his rival.

X. THE INQUISITION

The relation between the Renaissance and the Reformation has been and is a source of controversy. By scholars in the liberal tradition, the opening of men's minds to the ancient ideals and philosophies was one of the prime causes for the Reformation, and by them the Reformation has been considered as a step toward the unshackling of men's minds from superstition and prejudice. Mark Pattison, the English scholar, sees

sixteenth-century Protestantism and the new learning as two sides of the same coin. It was impossible, he contended, for a "consummate critic to be other than a Protestant,"¹ since "the attitude of the orthodox party towards classical studies in the first half of the sixteenth century . . . was one of pure antipathy. This phase of hostility to the 'new learning' under picture of reverence for the old, has been handed down to us by the broad satire of the *Epistolae obscurum viorum*."² In the same book Pattison says: "Learning is research; research must be free, and cannot co-exist with the claims of the Catholic clergy to be superior to inquiry. The French school it will be observed, is wholly in fact, or in intention, Protestant."³

Such attitudes as this led the nineteenth century, as it did the men of the enlightenment in the eighteenth century, to underestimate the contributions of the Middle Ages to our culture. The inevitable reaction set in and is at its height now. Today we may find historians who deny that there ever was a Renaissance. Others, admitting that there was one, nevertheless, deplore its effects on our civilization. Thomas More, canonized by the Catholic Church, has been deified not only by those who believe the state has no right to burn a man who disagrees with its principles but by those who, like More himself, have no objection to censorship and the stake when they are applied to what the Church called "seditious heretics." It is time that the balance was readjusted.

The French historian of Protestantism, Théodore de Bèze, traces the growth of the reformed religion straight from the humanists who studied Hebrew, Greek, and Latin through Erasmus and Lefèvre d'Estaples to the great reformers. It is by his pages on the growth of the new spirit in the Toulouse region that we are given a hint as to the part played by our protagonist, Julius Caesar Scaliger. De Bèze writes that the city of Toulouse had been long celebrated both for its commerce and its law school but that its Parliament was accused of being sanguinary and its University of having been for a long time without much interest in language or letters, and the city as a whole of being very superstitious. It was enough to have not doffed one's bonnet before a sacred image to be condemned as a heretic, or to have not flexed the knee when the bell rang the hour for the Ave Maria, or to have eaten meat on a fast day. He then tells of the effect of Scaliger on the region of which Toulouse was a part.

And in the city there was no man who enjoyed languages or letters who was not spied on and suspected of heresy. The coming of this great personage, Jules César de l'Escalle, descendant of the illustrious and ancient house of l'Escalle (which had for a long time ruled in Verona, Vicence and other cities seized since by the Venetians, and who having lost all hope of recovering his patrimony, retired

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 181-182.

¹² *Ibid.*, 173-174.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹ Pattison, 1889: 1: 156.

² Pattison, 1875: 519.

³ *Ibid.*, 510.

there at this period with Mark Anthony of the Roveres, Italian and Bishop of Agen) served marvellously to reawaken the good intelligence of the country, this personage having rendered his house more illustrious by the excellence of his learning, than it ever had been during the time of his ancestors by skill and great exploits of arms. With the study of letters entered also the knowledge of the truth.⁴

It is noticeable that de Bèze states that it was Scaliger's ability to open men's minds that links him with the Reformation movement. He nowhere states that Scaliger himself was a Protestant, though he does link Scaliger with certain Reformation ideas. To be sure, Joseph Scaliger makes the claim that his father was at least half a Protestant four years before his death,⁵ but this testimony, aside from the difficulty of defining what "half a Protestant" is, may be influenced by Joseph's allegiance to the Calvinists. It may be balanced by the recorded facts that Julius Caesar Scaliger lived his whole life without a break with the church and died a good Catholic. Yet, there is certainly evidence that he had sympathies with the Reformation. Since he died before the religious wars tore France in half, he was never under the necessity of taking a firm stand. In this he was fortunate. His interests were not theological and he belonged to the generation that could be above the battle without being cynical. By the time his son had reached maturity, the issue was so strong that one could not avoid taking sides.

In the old Scaliger's France, however, it seemed for a time as if the religious differences might be worked out by men of good will. But not for long, as may be seen in the story of one man. Lefèvre d'Estaples is considered the first of French reformers. This remarkable man combined great learning with the new religious feelings. In 1515 he published a commentary on the Pauline epistles which anticipated Luther's denial of transubstantiation and his theory of grace. In 1524 he published a French translation of the New Testament. Around him clustered a group of students and preachers who spread the new evangel.

Parliament became increasingly disturbed at the spread of heresy and began a vigorous prosecution. Lefèvre had fled to save his life and his translation was publicly burned. Francis I waxed hot or blew cold according to his political necessities. He tried to keep on good terms with the Protestant Germans who were his allies against Charles V. Not unreasonably, there was for some time hope that the French king would put himself on the side of toleration. Some dared dream he might become Protestant. Yet it was not to be. Such Protestant excesses as the placarding of Paris with broadsides against the mass caused Francis I to turn against the Protestants and allow them to be persecuted.

But, while in the north the gates to compromise were

being closed, in the region around Gascony, the prospects were better because of the influence of Marguerite d'Angoulême who became Queen of Navarre by her marriage to Henri d'Albret in 1527. Her capital, Nérac, not far from Agen, became, thanks to her influence, a place of refuge for those persecuted in Paris. When Lefèvre had to flee Paris it was to Marguerite he came for protection and he died at Nérac in 1536. Here, too, came Marot, the translator of the Psalms, when he had to flee Paris after the affair of the placards and here came many lesser men no less grateful for the sanctuary. Even Calvin passed by Nérac. It was in 1534 and, though he probably did not see the queen, he had an interview with Lefèvre.

Although hindsight tells us that the hopes of the reformers were too high, one can understand why Calvin was able as late as 1536 to dedicate his *Institution de la religion crestienne* to Francis in hopes of changing his mind. If Calvin could do this, it is no wonder that in the south, in spite of occasional persecutions, men still felt that free discussion might bring about the desired ends.

Scaliger became involved with the new ideas spread by the reformers at the same time as did a disciple of his, later to become the most famous soothsayer of modern times.

Scaliger's fame as a master of medicine drew men interested in new ideas to Agen. Full-fledged doctors as well as medical students came to learn from him. Many who could not make the trip corresponded with him. Of these latter was a young doctor named Michel de Nostredame who preferred to be called by the Latin name Nostradamus. He had not yet assumed the mantle of a prophet and written those *Centuries* which men who believe it possible to see into the future are still twisting into predictions based on their own hopes and fears. His letters to Scaliger interested the latter very much and Scaliger invited him to come and settle in Agen. He felt at all times his isolation from other learned men and thought that young Nostradamus would be a splendid addition to his circle.

Nostradamus accepted the invitation with alacrity. He moved to Agen with every intention of staying there for life. All of his anticipations were more than fulfilled when he came to know Scaliger well. No knowledge seemed beyond him. Years later remembering the lessons Scaliger taught him, Nostradamus was to write that at Agen: "the faculty of medicine was magnificently established and had been brought to life in its highest degree not only in medicine but in all platonian philosophy since the arrival of Julius Caesar Scaliger." Scaliger seemed to him to be the "father of Ciceronian eloquence," in sapience and perfect poetry a second Virgil; in the doctrine of medicine "two Galens." Toward him he felt "more gratitude than toward any person in the world."⁶

⁴ Théodore de Bèze, 1883-1884: 1: 20-21.

⁵ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Scaliger*.

⁶ J. R. Boulenger, 1933: 49-50.

Scaliger must have been flattered by such worship and even the fact that Nostradamus set up practice in competition with his own practice did not disturb him. The younger man bought himself a home, married a young girl of Agen, and soon had two children by her.

An anecdote, not written down until the next century, shows that Nostradamus and Scaliger were considered by the citizens of Agen to be among their most valuable possessions. Suspecting that the two doctors might be lured away, the city fathers came to them with splendid presents to induce them to stay. The two doctors refused the gifts, with the remark that if Agen had money to give away it should be bestowed upon the sick and the poor. When this splendid response became known, the citizens of the town organized a triumphal procession. The two learned men were carried through the streets like two conquering heroes returned from a victorious battle.⁷

Life was not always this pleasant. There were forces in Agen that looked with suspicion upon the two doctors. Scaliger and Nostradamus engaged in ranging speculations not only about matters concerning their profession but about religion as well. New ideas were in the air—and ideas were their business. Suddenly the paradise of intellectual converse they had been living in was invaded by an ominous arrival. The Inquisition had come to Agen.

Nostradamus decided that the moment had come to take a little trip. He went to Bordeaux. Scaliger stayed to face the Inquisition.

In Agen, the school teachers of the city, Nicole Maurel, Pierre Allard, Jean de Lagarde, and Philibert Sarrazin, were the chief disseminators of the new ideas. Philibert Sarrazin had been sent by the disciple of Calvin, Albert Babinot, to spread the doctrine of the Reformation.⁸ Sarrazin was a learned, virtuous, god-fearing man. He had himself appointed by the Consuls of Agen, on August 21, 1535, as regent of the school and was soon a familiar of the most prominent families of the cities. His friends included: Pierre de Secondat, general of the finances—ancestor of Montesquieu; Robert de Godaillh, treasurer of the king; Marc Ricard, prior of the Augustine Monastery who had been imprisoned the previous year, and Scaliger.⁹ With the latter, being a doctor himself, he became particularly intimate and attended Madame Scaliger in childbirth.¹⁰ The eldest son of Scaliger, Sylvius, was sent to him for instruction with the other boys of good family in the town. Nostradamus was also intimate with Sarrazin. Their pupils became the ardent reformers of the next generation and helped to make Agen the center of Protestant propaganda for the Midi. The older citizens were greatly impressed, also, and discussed the

⁷ *Ibid.*, 49. The details of Nostradamus' relations with Scaliger are also given in Lee McCann, 1941: 81–108.

⁸ Ernest Gaullieur, 1884: 37 ff.

⁹ M. O. Fallières and Canon Durengues, 1913: 213–215.

¹⁰ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Sarrazin*.

new ideas with a freedom that they were to regret when the Inquisition moved in.

Early in March, 1538, a Dominican monk named Louis de Rochette who was Inquisitor of the Faith for the region of Languedoc and the Duchy of Guyenne, was ordered by the King to leave Toulouse, where he ordinarily held his court, and proceed to Agen to root out the heretics. Following these orders he came to Agen and preached a long sermon at the church of St. Fiary in which he told the people what he had come for and urged them to denounce the heretics in their midst. He then had placards posted around the city enjoining everyone able to furnish information about local heretics to come as witnesses before his court.¹¹

In spite of the fact that these placards were torn down by a band of armed men, dressed in black, they had their effect and more than seventy depositions were received. Those who had been attracted by the new ideas were greatly alarmed. For remarks made in casual conversation the stake and the hangman's noose loomed. That some men are treacherous informers is an historical fact, but their victims are always surprised to discover that remarks made in the confidence of private surroundings become a matter of public record—often exaggerated and twisted out of context. Many of the most prominent citizens of Agen must have cursed the fact they had ever trusted anyone. The deposition not only linked the three school regents with the spreading of heretical doctrine but gave detailed proof that the ideas of the reformation were widespread among all classes from the humble artisans to the nobles. Fortunately, the archives of the bishopric of Agen have yielded up the original documents in the case and we are enabled thereby to follow the process and discover the extent of the heresy. We see that among the prohibited books discovered were those by Erasmus, Zwingli, and Luther. Even Calvin's *Institution* is discovered, although it had only been published for two years. Yet, the doctrines revealed are mainly Lutheran: attacks against free will, fasting, indulgences, transubstantiation, the cult of the virgin and the saints, use of candles and bells, and other such doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church.¹²

The Inquisitor began his inquiries on March 6 and by March 10, Pierre Allard, Nicole Maurel, and Jean de Lagarde were in prison; and Sarrazin, who was most directly menaced, had taken refuge in flight, probably warned by Louis de Rochette himself. The inquisitor seems, as later evidence shows, to have been in secret sympathy with the ideas of the Reformation.¹³ After April 14, he disappears from Agen and the Inquisition is carried on by Father Antoine Richard, the vicar. This latter, too, appears to have become influenced by the Reformation. The inquisitor Rochette was arrested as a sodomite. His vicar, Richard, was burned

¹¹ Théodore de Bèze, 1883–1884: 1: 39.

¹² M. O. Fallières and Canon Durengues, 1913: 213–223.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 215.

on the same charge seven or eight days later. It is more than probable that the morals charge was a mask and that they had both become convinced of the validity of the Reformation doctrines in the course of their investigations. This is borne out by the fact that the accused they examined got off very lightly indeed considering the seriousness of the charges. They were merely condemned to make an honorable *amende* before the cathedral dressed in shirts, holding torches in their hands; and to sign abjurations.¹⁴

Scaliger was implicated in the affair from the beginning. He was accused of having forbidden books in his home, of being the friend of Sarrazin, of holding that Lent was founded neither by Christ nor by the apostles, that transubstantiation was not an article of faith, and of eating meat on fast days.¹⁵

The witnesses against Scaliger were able to cite his heretical remarks in some detail. The first of these witnesses was called on March 8. He was a sixty-three-year-old ropemaker named Pierre Pefeyre, a native of Agen. He came forward voluntarily and made his deposition under oath. Being in the parish of Monbran where "Monsieur de July" had his house, he was asked by that gentleman to witness the will he had drawn up. Scaliger was in good health but wanted to be sure to make his will in good time. According to Pefeyre, Scaliger ordered that he put in his will that the bells of the churches be not rung the day of his death, saying "what good does that do?" He further said that as long as there were only two torches he did not care about anything else concerning his burial. In the will, too, his son was ordered to burn a green covered book that he did not want his son to use after his death.¹⁶

Pefeyre's testimony revealed to the Inquisition that Scaliger had seemingly been affected by the antagonistic attitude toward the bells and candles that some reformers were preaching. Another witness appeared the very next day in the monastery of the presiding friar where the evidence was being taken and accused Scaliger of speaking against Purgatory, an even more serious charge.

This witness was a sixty-nine year old shoemaker of Agen, a certain Master Guyon Emery. He testified that last January, the day of the conversion of Saint Paul, he was waiting in order to ring the bells of the church for a funeral when the Master Mason of the cathedral church, Jehan Le Loup, came up to gossip. Le Loup told how "Master Julles" the doctor, had told him that there was no Purgatory. Le Loup gave him the lie. Le Loup also told Master Emery that the consul Saint-Project had made a similar remark to him.¹⁷

On March 10 Master Jehan Le Loup appeared in person before the committee and told of a dinner party

that had taken place after Christmas at the house of Monsieur Pierre de Secondat, the treasurer general. Present—aside from the host and Master Le Loup himself—were Mademoiselle, the wife of the general, and Sieur Bertrand Saint-Project. This latter stated that he had just come from Lésinham (now Lusignan) where he had been with "Master Julles," Scaliger had remained there but Saint-Project had returned. Then the question of Purgatory was introduced and Saint-Project declared that it did not exist. At this, Master Le Loup insisted it did. The general Secondat then said: "Where is it? I tell you that when you die you either go to Paradise or Hell."¹⁸

This ended Master Le Loup's deposition for this day but he came back the next to continue his testimony in regard to the evening at General Secondat's. After supper, his story goes on, Saint-Project began to speak of dying, remarking that all must die. Then General Secondat whispered some words into Saint-Project's ear at which Saint-Project said out loud, "When we are dead we go either to Heaven or Hell." General Secondat agreed, but his wife asked if there were, then, no Purgatory? Both answered her at once. "Where is Purgatory? Name the place. Everyone knows that Paradise is in Heaven and Hell in the earth, but you can't say where Purgatory is." Le Loup broke in: "There where God wants it to be." Madame Secondat asked them all for the honor of God not to continue the discussion and she put her hands over her ears. At this, Saint-Project changed the subject by telling how he had gone to Lésinham with Monsieur Julles, who had come to see a sick person.¹⁹

This scene so vividly painted by the deponent does serve to give us a glimpse into the free talk that went around the dinner tables of Agen. If it sounds naïve it may be because it is strained through the mind of the Master mason, but it probably was in essence as he reported it. Master Jehan Le Loup drags Scaliger's name into the heretical conversation as if to prove his intimacy not only with the people present but with their ideas.

On March 12 appeared the last witness against Scaliger, Master Guillaume Lauricesches, Consul of Agen of that year and Lieutenant of the Consuls. He told how six or seven years before he had fled the plague which was then raging in Agen. He had gone to the house of the late Messire Antoine Comunal the priest of Artigues who was vicar of the parish of Monbran where "Master Julien César, doctor" was residing at his estate—he, too, being in flight from the plague. The vicar told Master Lauricesches that Scaliger had said at the time he made his will that he wanted no bells to be sounded when he was dead and that he wanted no torches but only a few tapers at his tomb. The vicar also reported the fact that Scaliger had confessed him-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 217 ff., and de Bèze, 1883-1884: 1: 40 and n. 1.

¹⁵ Théodore de Bèze, 1883-1884, 1: 39.

¹⁶ M. O. Fallières and Canon Durengues, 1913: document 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, document 14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, document 15. Pierre de Secondat and his son later openly sided with the Reformation.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, document 18.

self to another priest while standing up. Further, that Scaliger had come to him one day in church and asked to receive the *Corpus Domini* standing upright. The vicar refused to administer it to him until he assumed the proper position. He knelt and received it.²⁰

This testimony, as we see, merely repeats the Zwingli-like objection to bells and tapers and adds the incident of Scaliger desiring to receive the Host while standing. However heretical this might have sounded, it was merely Scaliger's concern for antiquity. He had read in Tertullian that his contemporaries received in this position. Nevertheless, the testimony as a whole seems to prove that Scaliger was at least a mild partisan of reform—enough so that he was in a very awkward, if not, indeed, a mortally dangerous situation.

Scaliger had the great good fortune, however, to be able to answer the charges before a group of men who were predisposed by their learning and Scaliger's reputation to be favorable to him. If his inquest had taken place a year later he might well have been burned alive as was the Dominican monk, Jerome Vindocin, and have replaced him as the first martyr of the Reformation at Agen.²¹

The three counselors of the Parliament of Bordeaux who were sent to the king to look into the trouble at Agen were Geoffroy de Lachassaigne, who was a writer of Latin poetry; Arnoul Le Ferron, the historian whom Scaliger already knew well; and Briand de Vallée, the friend of Rabelais. This latter was probably sympathetic to Scaliger's ideas since he was a frequenter of Marguerite's court at Nérac and probably held the same ideas himself.²²

According to de Bèze, Scaliger's defense was that he ate meat on fast days because he was troubled with the gout and he proved the non-heretical character of the other accusations by citing the councils of the church. It is too bad we cannot know just what went on at the meeting. It is evident, however, that Scaliger impressed the three counselors so greatly that they not only dismissed the charges against him but accepted his testimony for the dismissal of charges against Jacques Thouard, the clerk of the Seneschal's Court, whose person was in great danger. Not only that, but because of Scaliger's solicitations they left untouched the treasurer of the king, Robert de Godailh, in spite of the fact that his children fled with Sarrazin.²³

Scaliger must have known that he would not again come off so lightly, and he must have decided to be more cautious henceforth. His interest was in scholarship rather than church doctrines and politics. And yet, he was not a coward. He saw the corruption of

the monastic orders, and his poems are full of satiric passages directed at the monks.²⁴ According to Mark Pattison, when the Jesuits brought out an edition of Scaliger's poems they had to change several poems including one on St. Peter which was just like one a Protestant would have written.²⁵ After Scaliger's death the Council of Trent put both his *Poemata* and his *Commentaries on Theophrastus* on the Index of prohibited books *donec emendentur*.²⁶

Not only then did Scaliger fail to hold his tongue completely, but he made himself a force on the side of tolerance. To be sure, he could rejoice when Dolet was burned but that was because he had personal reasons for hating the scholarly printer. But, as we have seen, when Thouard was in danger he did not hesitate to speak in his behalf. How often after this he used his influence on behalf of the persecuted we have no way of knowing. But that at least once more he did, we have evidence. This was not to happen until 1542, though, and we will reserve the story for its proper place.

Now these religious and personal difficulties did not stem the outpourings of Scaliger's scholarship. During this period he was engaged in translating and commenting on Aristotle's *History of Animals*. Since this work was, according to Buffon, the best of its kind up to the time he himself wrote, the important service Scaliger rendered learning may be appreciated. And this he did at the most troubled period of his life, and at a time when his gout was becoming painful. His manuscript was completed on December 17, 1538.²⁷

After the tumult had died down, Nostradamus returned to Agen. At this moment a cruel blow struck him. Wife and babies died. He left Agen once more, never to return.

Always he carried the memory of Scaliger with him as a precious treasure. Scaliger did not return the compliment. He lashed out at Nostradamus with his Latin epigrams. These poems of Scaliger have annoyed the biographers of Nostradamus but they are perfectly comprehensible to anyone else. Scaliger was amazed at the quite ordinary young doctor setting himself up as a great prophet. "How," he asked, "can Nostradamus predict the future when he doesn't even know what is going on at the present time?"²⁸ He wondered why men paid any attention to the "meaningless language of that impure idiot."²⁹ We still wonder.

²⁴ Joseph tells us his father hated monks and wrote many epigrams against them (1667, under word *Scaliger*). Among these are the following in his *Poemata*, 1: 195, 407, 408, and 527, 1600.

²⁵ Pattison, 1889: 1: 154.

²⁶ Concili Tridentini . . . 1644: 377.

²⁷ The original ms., which I examined in the University of Leyden, is dated in Scaliger's own hand. It was finally published at Toulouse in 1619 under the editorship of P. J. de Maussac.

²⁸ *Poemata* 1: 418, 1600.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 207. See also 186.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, document 32.

²¹ Paul Courteault, 1938: 204. Joseph Scaliger writes "They burned at Agen at the time my mother was big with me, a Jacobin brother Jerome, very cruelly, because he was a protestant" (1667, under word *Scaliger*).

²² Ernest Gaullieur, 1884: 41.

²³ Théodore de Bèze, 1883-1884: 1: 39-40.

XI. AGAINST THE SLANDERERS OF POETRY

Though Scaliger's interests were literary and scientific rather than theological, he could not help, as we have seen, coming to the attention of the Inquisition. In a sense there were no purely literary matters. All was under the eyes of the guardians of faith and morality. So it is that Scaliger, who was to make his name as the dictator of poetry, had first to defend the very right of poetry to exist. Those who dragged him before the inquisitional court held the conviction that poetry was evil since at best it took men's minds off the search of salvation and at worst undermined their faith with pagan superstition.

To answer them Scaliger wrote—not, as did Sidney, a defense of poetry—the old soldier scorned that position—but an attack “Against the Slanderers of Poetry.”¹ Short enough to quote in its entirety it nevertheless manages to meet most of the contemporary objections to imaginative literature.

Not only is the human race by its very nature prone to believe everything, but it is often influenced to such a degree that it accepts and considers true even those things which bring destruction to body and soul, so that it cannot be influenced by any amount of reasoning. I have seen a swarm of impostors flying about the whole world, promiscuously and with no difficulty enticing every kind of disease needing cure. I have seen them, although they are unknown and have never been seen before, accepted as doctors by the sick until by the efforts of these quacks and their faith in them, the patients have lost their diseases and lives at one and the same time.

Turning from our bodies to our souls—what state they are now in I have no interest in relating since it is a matter of common knowledge, nor am I allowed to since it is dangerous. I dare say one thing only: never has there been an age in which the lowest and most worthless person had not been permitted to talk about and discuss matters of the highest importance. So, it is no wonder if those who think wrongly about divine law should dare to slander poetry. For instance, they say that poetry undermines piety, fills the minds of the young with vices and makes them more effeminate, and that for this reason poetry was banished by Plato from his Republic.

Now, although those critics are not worth my trouble, nevertheless because of the weight of Plato's authority I must say a few words. For example, their statement that poetry undermines piety—they falsify to such an extent as to instance particularly tales of superstitions. If these critics exiled poets for these tales they would show their ignorance. There is no better human device for increasing divine worship than superstition. It is similar to ambition: in itself ambition is a vice but it is the mother of the highest virtues. So it is with superstition when you gradually remove something from it, as if you were molding a bear cub by licking it. But those who in the beginning swallowed that plain and simple religion totter under the slightest argument, grow weak from the least friction, and

finally become *atheists*.² Of these we know an almost infinite number.

As to their second objection: that poetry fills the mind with vices. Surely in the Old Testament itself there is, to put the matter mildly, every type, every manner of vice. These commonplace people have not perceived that *narrative* does not differ from *poetry* except in style. And although they profess to write, they compose their unimportant verse in French or Italian.³ So it is not *poesy* (which they strive in vain to compose), but Latin *poetry* which they cannot attain to, which they rashly censure. But more than enough about those monstrosities, for they are the progeny of a degenerate age. However, with regard to Plato a few words are necessary.

If you say that you reject all poets, Plato, you are a windbag. You do not reject Empedocles, or Pythagoras, or Theognis, or those from whose poetry you draw precepts: Euripides and Sophocles. If [your theory of exile is] on account of Homer alone, who pictured gods as earthen statues and fornicators, whom we despise, Homer alone should leave. Let him be banned from your Republic but at the same time that he is, let your Republic be banned from our Republic.⁴

Why? you ask. He told stories about adultery, and, considering it a matter of no importance, left it for you to decide whether you should consider them false or true. But you do not tell of adultery, you praise it; you do not suggest it, you establish it; you do not permit it, you command it.

But, you will say, there are other things in my works both permissible and desirable. We shall see elsewhere whether there are things, too, worse and fouler than these. Suffice it for the moment to say that there are other things in Homer, also, on account of which his books must be read and thoroughly studied, so much so that Horace preferred him to Crantor and Chrysippus.

Truly, Plato, since you composed poetry (and what poetry! May the gods drive that vice from the earth), and according to your own laws were an exile from your Republic, but did not live in exile, you showed that other poets as well should not be exiled.

We for our part shall gladly pass our lives outside of your Republic (as we have said) with our modest wives and children. We shall live with Moses, with Deborah, with the mother of Samuel, with the minstrel King, with the prophets, with Zachariah, with Simeon, with the ever-virgin Mother of God, whose *poetry* is more important than your whole *Republic* and all your laws.

As to eulogizing *poetry*, I have neither sufficient space nor eloquence.

Now if the most ancient things are the most noble—as, for example, certain first beginnings and foundations of things to come in the bosom of nature—music came before prose. For breathing and singing are of this class and are a kind of *poetry*; that is, the very foundation of our life. If the most gentle and soothing things are the most noble, what are worries but inducements to death? These worries are banished by poetry. If the wisest things are the most noble, the order of the heavens or of the universe

² We have already seen how loosely this term was used. Rabelais called Scaliger “an atheist,” and Scaliger bestowed on “Baryaeus” the same title.

³ Scaliger considered himself superior to writers who used their mother tongue, but he was not completely scornful of them. He was interested in, and praised, poetry written in French and Italian. For instance he speaks highly of the poetry of Ronsard and the *Pléiade* in *Scripsit haec pro poetis Gallicanis, Poemata 1: 191*, 1600; and the Italian love poems of Bandello in *Matthaeus Bandellus 1: 304*.

⁴ Compare *De poetis a Platone ejectis e repub., Poemata 1: 13*, 1600.

¹ *Epistolae*, 409–413, 1600. For a fuller discussion see my article, Scaliger's defense of poetry, *Pub. Mod. Lang. Assn.* 63: 1125–1130, 1948.

and the things which are therein is nothing else than an appropriate harmony.

Nor, if you wish, do you work less with rhetorical ornaments in prose. For dress, inclination and manners is what makes the harlot. Also, there are rhetorical ornaments in . . . and, finally if you should eliminate those ornaments which are used in the worship of *God most high*, you would eliminate *God* himself. These are all *poetic* ornaments.

If you do not accept my thesis, you will have to eliminate the stories from the Bible. I have finished.

Who were the "slanderers of poetry" against whom this declamation was written? Obviously, they were those people who objected to poetry on moral and religious grounds and who supported their objections by appealing to the authority of Plato. In doing this they were following Saint Augustine who, it will be remembered, placed Plato above all the pagan heroes, even above the pagan gods, because he wanted the poets banished from his commonwealth.⁵ Saint Augustine formulated the church's objections to poetry so platonically that the defenders of poetry had henceforth to take Plato's views into consideration.

Scaliger's attack on Plato is typical of the Renaissance reply to the famous passage in the *Republic*. First, of course, he insists that Plato is not consistent since he uses poetry to prove his point. Scaliger does not deny that Homer was guilty of falsehoods but he asserts that the reader is able to distinguish between the true and the false, whereas Plato, who was thinking of the education of young people, was unwilling to take this risk. His main point, however, is that modern morality, the Christian religion itself, is based on "poetry," i.e., the scriptures, and that no Christian can deny "poetry" without denying the basis of his beliefs. Further, from the point of view of Christian morality, Plato with his passages on homosexuality and his advocacy of adultery is less worthy to be listened to than Homer. Behind all of this is Scaliger's assumption that poetry *does* teach and, on the whole, teaches good morals. A passage in his *Poetics* puts these same ideas in shorter form. After saying that Plato in the *Ion* calls the poets the interpreters of the Gods, Scaliger remarks:

It follows, it seems to me, that his authority in his political books, which certain barbarous and insensible men have construed as putting poets out of the republic, is of less value. If, to a certain extent, he condemns the scurrilities of Poets, one must not overlook the poetical passages recited by him to bolster his own arguments. Plato should look at himself and see how many improper and impure stories he introduces and what opinions smelling of the Greek vice he forces on the reader at the same time. Certainly it would be worth while never to have read the *Symposium*, the *Phaedrus*, and other monstrosities.⁶

In all probability the lacuna near the end of the text was made by the Protestant editors leaving out Scaliger's reference to the poetry of the mass. Certainly it fits in with his argument that poetry cannot reasonably be attacked by Christians, especially by Catholics. If

the editor, Dousa, or Julius Caesar's son, Joseph, who gave him these letters, decided to make Scaliger look as much like a Protestant as possible, it was not the first time that this attempt was made.

The final paragraphs of Scaliger's "Against the Slanderers of Poetry" are of importance in clarifying his definition of poetry. Scaliger does not, as does Aristotle, make imitation the end of poetry. For Scaliger the end of poetry is pleasurable teaching and the material of poetry is verse.⁷ Since, as we have seen, he declares that music and harmony are inseparable from the universe, poetry, whose material is words in rhythmic or metrical order, cannot be attacked without denying the universe itself. Secondly, the ornaments of poetry are appropriate styles and figures of speech. Since these are used not only in prose but in the very worship of God, poetry cannot be condemned from this point of view either. Now Scaliger has already pointed out that narrative does not differ from poetry except in style, a remark which is elaborated in his *Poetics* where he says that poetry puts down the image of things both real and imaginary. Since writers of stories (including those who wrote the sacred books) also put down the image of things, poetry cannot be attacked from this point of view without doing away with all stories, which would mean doing away with the Bible.

The great argument of Scaliger's "Defense of Poetry," then, is that it is impossible to attack poetry without destroying those very things which the attackers of poetry, themselves, hold most dear. Thus, short as is Scaliger's "Defense of Poetry," it is unanswerable by those who accept the definitions given in it and in the *Poetics*.

XII. POET AND GRAMMARIAN

In 1539 Scaliger published his *Heroes*, a little book of poetry celebrating great men. The idea for such a collection came from Ausonius the fourth-century poet, but Scaliger's use of it was so successful that a recent critic declares that it "set the style for the later neo-Latin writers."¹ To his glorification of such ancient heroes as Aristotle, Caesar, Hippocrates, Cicero, and Virgil, is added praise of such moderns as Theodorus Gaza, Pico della Mirandola, Bembo, Ficino, Politian, Erasmus, and Fracastoro. The little epigram he wrote on the author of *Syphilis* may serve to illustrate all. In an allusion to the fact that Fracastoro—who was poet and doctor in one—was born with his lips sealed together, Scaliger writes:

Thine infant lips, Fracastor, nature seal'd
But the mute organ favouring Phoebus heal'd:
He broke the chain; and hence to thee belong
The art of healing, and the power of song.²

⁷ Scaliger's clearest statement on the end of poetry is *Poetics*, Bk. 6, chap. 2. Bk. 2 of the *Poetics* contains his discussion of the material of poetry.

¹ Leicester Bradner, 1940: 155.

² *Poemata* 1: 301, 1600. Translated by Roscoe in H. P. Dodd's *The Epigrammatists*, 118, London, 1876.

⁵ *De civitate dei* 2: 8.

⁶ J. C. Scaliger, 1561: Bk. 1, chap. 2.

This book of graceful compliments to famous men is marred by Scaliger's obsession with his own personality and name. We can accept his exaggerated praise of such personal friends as Bandello, Fregoso, and his tutor Giovanni Giocondo but when we find poems celebrating his brother, his father, and other of his ancestors, we wonder if this was not the real purpose of the book. Nor does he stop there. One of the poems (written by Antonio Percinio) celebrates Julius Caesar Scaliger. Thus, he himself is among the heroes. But that is not all. The next poem is his own epitaph written by himself. It is redeemed by its wit.

My Epitaph

Italian born and German bred,
I rest in France now that I'm dead;
My gifts for war and poetry's grace
Are buried in this noble place.⁸

The last poem in this collection throws light on Scaliger's belief that he possessed powers not given the ordinary man. Having worked for many nights on his *Heroes*, Scaliger, feeling that his work was completed, took a light lunch and went to sleep. He dreamed he was in a church in Verona before his family tombs. Suddenly a very tall man with a serious face appeared to him and asked him why he had not been placed among Scaliger's heroes. I am, he said, Benedict Brugnol. I taught both your father and your uncles and carried you in my arms when you were a baby. I died in Venice and was buried there. The vision vanished and Scaliger wrote the poem requested,⁴ though he never found out the truth about Brugnol and had never heard of him. His son Joseph, however, tells us that Marc-Antoine Muret wrote him in 1566 that among the sights he should visit was the tomb of the grammarian Benedict Brugnol. Joseph believes this vision to have been little less than a miracle.⁵

Nor is this the only incident of his father's powers he gives. He tells us that when his young brother Odet was born, Scaliger naturally loved him dearly. Yet, though the child's disposition was reasonably happy, Scaliger could never look at him without sighing. His wife, feeling that her husband foresaw Odet's death, asked him why he was so worried. He told her to watch the nurse, who drank too much. The mother did so. One night she found the nurse asleep stretched out on top of the little boy, her mouth on his. One moment more and Odet would have been suffocated. This same thing happened again, the mother took the child away from the nurse and put him in care of a young girl. Her mind was now at ease. But not her husband's. He still feared for his son. He was right. The young girl liked Odet so much she slept with him in her arms. One night she embraced him so tightly

that he was suffocated and died. Thus, says Joseph, his father's prediction came true.⁶

Such a loss could not fail to find literary expression. Scaliger wrote a poem to the soul of little Odet whom he felt had shown signs of such great intelligence that if he had lived he would have been the wonder of the age. The death of Odet, which leaves to Scaliger nothing but tears, is a greater disaster than the destruction of Troy.⁷

Yet the most remarkable results of Odet's death was an oration which Scaliger wrote and published the previous year, 1538.⁸ It is a lengthy one in the most approved classical style and Scaliger is presumably delivering it before a body of fellow citizens, though undoubtedly this is a fiction. It is dedicated to Arnoul Le Ferron in gratitude for his help in clearing Scaliger of charges of heresy. Though it was presumably written because of his mourning for Odet, its real purposes are all too evident. They are to show that Scaliger can write an eloquent oration in the style of his master, Cicero, and to give to his contemporaries his version of the history of his family. He begins with several pages of lamentations for his son and then asks whether he shall praise France where Odet died or Italy whence his family sprang. He decides to do both and gives a listing of the great excellences of these two countries. As countries, France and Italy are equal in the wonders of nature. Yet if it is a question of cities there is one city, and one alone, that cannot be compared with any other. It is Verona. It excels both in natural beauty and in the character of its citizens. Even its river is the noblest in the world and surely no lake is equal in beauty to Lake Garda. To this superlative city is linked for all times the name of Scaliger.

At great length Scaliger then gives the fabled origin of the Scaliger family, tracing it back to the mists of antiquity. Scaligers were flourishing long before modern titles of nobility such as Count and Marquis had come into being. In doing this Scaliger was following the accepted story as to the origin of the princely family of Verona, a story which modern scholarship has shown to be false. Scaliger then goes on to tell of the rule of the family over Verona, its exile, its continuation through his father and himself down to the child who has just died.

This oration, then, starting out as a tribute to a dead son becomes the most considerable document Scaliger himself wrote in defense of his claims of princely descent. As far as we know, his contemporaries accepted his story completely.⁹

⁸ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 48-49.

⁷ *Poemata* 1: 606-607, 1600.

⁸ *Epistolae*, 312-352, 1600.

⁹ This oration is preceded by a letter to Arnoul Le Ferron. In it Scaliger explains that, though orations are usually reserved to praise men who have accomplished something, he feels it only fair that a child with a great future who dies young should have an oration, too. As might be expected Scaliger is very bitter

³ *Poemata* 1: 313, 1600.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: 314-315.

⁵ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 44, and 1670, under word *Brugnolus*.

Meanwhile, Scaliger, like Rabelais, turned his hand to a commentary on Hippocrates, choosing the *De Somnis*. His prefatory letter to Jean Alesme shows clearly what he thought of writers like Rabelais who, forsaking the cult of chaste letters worshipped by Scaliger, turn to copying the most licentious of the classical writers:

Whom can we [the followers of chaste letters] please, Alesme? Who will appreciate our writings among those who have only Lucian and Aristophanes in their hands—may the gods grant they are only in the hands and not the hearts! And this not so much, by Hercules, because they admire the style of these writers whose finer points they are incapable of either appreciating or imitating but because they like their dirty talk—if you can call it talk instead of poison. How can we fail to be horrified when we see them modeling themselves on these impieties? Today there is too much security and consequently too much slackness, not to say license, dear Alesme. This is what they call liberty.¹⁰

This book completed, his thoughts turned back to his family. Like most men of his age, Scaliger had a strong dynastic sense. His first born son, Stephanus Sylvius Caesar, he considered the repository of the glories of his name and reputation. Nothing was to be left undone for him that a father could do. Sylvius was now entering the second decade of his life and Scaliger felt that it was time for him to begin his serious study of the Latin language. He looked around for a suitable grammar but found none that was not full of important errors. For Scaliger the solution was simple. He would write one. So, in spite of the heavy requirements of his medical duties, he set to work and composed one of his most notable contributions to knowledge, his *Principles of the Latin Language*.¹¹ In the preface addressed to Sylvius, Scaliger wrote that this book cannot be considered merely as a grammatical treatise. It should be judged as a real contribution to learning since it is based not on the grammarians who preceded him, but on a study of the language itself. Modern scholars have agreed with Scaliger. It has been called both "the first known scientific Latin grammar"¹² and "an acute and judicious work on the leading principles of the language."¹³

Yet, if he is to be believed it is no desire for fame that leads him to the composition of this work. His primary concern is the education of his Sylvius. He begins his preface:

Now, my son Sylvius Caesar, that you have emerged from the difficulties of more elementary literature, it is

over the carelessness of "those monsters who wish to be called nurses." Scaliger concludes his letter by asking his friend to act as father for his other children if he should die (*Epistolae*, 310–312, 1600). Le Ferron who hitherto had called Scaliger "father," henceforth speaks of Sylvius Scaliger as his son.

¹⁰ J. C. Scaliger, 1539. The prefatory letter is reprinted in his *Epistolae*, 8–13, 1600.

¹¹ *De causis linguae latinae*, Lyons, 1540. *Causis*, literally *causes*, is more meaningful if translated as *Principles*.

¹² H. T. Peck, 1911: 322.

¹³ J. E. Sandys, 1905: 2: 178.

not proper that you undertake more serious studies before knowing the reasons for the particular rules, for through them the scope of each and every important field of learning has had to be revealed. For though you might know the rules established by certain observations, however, since you might often wonder if a certain case comes under the rules and always try to find the reason for the rules, I have felt that life would be insupportable for me if I did not remove these obstacles from your path.

Undoubtedly we have here what Scaliger means by a philosophical approach to language study. It is not enough to learn rules by rote. One must learn the reasons behind them really to attain knowledge. For the young student who naturally prefers the easier way, Scaliger has this advice:

My son, at your age since this seems at first glance a bit severe, I want your mind to be imbued with this: no work derives its real worth from what is commonplace. It is then of the highest importance to accustom yourself from the beginning to what is most excellent. For the difficulties which are the despair and terror of barbarous and rude spirits are not so for us. We who want truth look upon difficulties as so many armies which we must conquer.

Looking about for a printer worthy of his treatise, Scaliger turned to Sebastian Gryphius, a German who had set up as a printer in Lyons. Scaliger wrote a letter to him offering him the work in these words:

I was anxious, my Gryphius, that a person of such true piety, excellent learning and known humanity should overlook and direct my writings, if you are willing to do so. For in case my compositions can be of any service they will be handed down to posterity with the recommendation of your care and authority.¹⁴

Gryphius accepted and in this year, 1540, appeared at Lyons a beautiful and carefully printed book that is a compliment to both the author and the printer.¹⁵

This was not Scaliger's only contribution to the world this year, for on August 4 was born Joseph, who was to continue his dynasty in the kingdom of scholarship.

XIII. THE LADY AND THE MONK

In 1541 Andrew Melanchthon, a nephew of the German reformer, came to Agenais and established himself in Tonneins.¹ Ostensibly his purpose was to teach school but his real reason for coming was to propagate the ideas of his uncle. He soon made the acquaintance of Julius Caesar Scaliger and they found themselves linked closely by their common love of learning. He was not long left in peace. The Parliament following direct orders from the King had intensified its search for heresy and the bearer of such a notorious name could not hope to escape. He was taken, after being denounced by the clergy, to the prison of Agen. His friends hastened to move him from this dangerous situ-

¹⁴ Letter to Sebastian Gryphius, prefaced to *De causis*. . . .

¹⁵ My own copy is a gift from Professor D. C. Allen of Johns Hopkins.

¹ Théodore de Bèze, 1883–1884: 1: 42–43.

ation. Most powerful among them was Marguerite of Navarre, whose fondness for Philip Melanchthon led her to intervene for his nephew. Her first step was to remove Andrew from the clutches of the Bishop of Agen, which she managed to do by an appeal to the Parliament of Bordeaux. On June 22, 1542 he was removed to the Conciergerie at Bordeaux.²

Ten days after his removal it was ordered that the prisoner be conducted out of the realm under guard with orders never to return to France. For some reason this order was never carried out but the young Melanchthon was transferred to the dungeon of Château-Trompette. In an attempt to hasten his death, certain members of Parliament tried to pretend he was a Breton.

At this, Marguerite sent one of her courtiers to Charles de Gramont, her husband's representative as Governor of Guyenne, asking him to intervene. Thus this known persecutor of heretics appeared on July 31, 1543 before the Parliament and begged them to release Melanchthon. He reminded them that the affair had international implications that might hurt the King's German alliances. The Duke of Saxony intervened personally for his subject.³

Yet Andrew still languished in prison subject to ill treatment and with chains upon his limbs. Scaliger circulated a poem addressed to him in which he deplored his plight and urged him to have faith in his deliverance.⁴ Nor did Scaliger merely write a poem for his friend. He began busying himself in behalf of the German.

Meanwhile Philip Melanchthon had become increasingly concerned and had written letters to Marguerite to urge her to stronger action. Marguerite decided to take the drastic step of appealing personally to Parliament. On March 22, 1544 she made a formal entry into Bordeaux and the next day, after prudently and publicly attending mass, she addressed the Parliament.

She began by discussing the political situation and by thanking the Parliament for the justice it had rendered its subjects. Then passing to the general subject of heresy, she made a specific plea on behalf of Andrew Melanchthon. She denied that he was a Breton, and complained about the bitter treatment he was receiving in the dungeons of Château-Trompette. Finally she made a moving plea that the Parliament allow itself to exercise the finest privilege of rulers—the privilege of granting pardons, and to allow the gates of the dungeons to be opened for Andrew.⁵

We do not know what effect this request had upon a Parliament jealous of its privileges, but we do know that Andrew Melanchthon received his liberty. De Bèze states that this came about because of the "assistance of a friend."⁶ It is not probable that by this phrase he could have meant a personage like Marguerite,

Who, then, was this friend? It seems to have been Julius Caesar Scaliger himself. For Joseph writes:

My father, four years before his death, was half Lutheran. He saw more and more abuses every day. . . . The nephew of Melanchthon was imprisoned at Bordeaux. The theologians were vehement [against him]. My father wrote so much that he saved him. If Andrew had been French, he would not have escaped. My father was honored and respected by all the gentlemen of the court.⁷

It is not unlikely, then, that Scaliger was able by exercising the authority of his personality and the high esteem he was held in by the judges to save Andrew Melanchthon as he had saved an earlier friend from the persecutions of the orthodox party.

Activity such as this was not enough for Scaliger. Long after his age and circumstances had determined that he would never leave his new sphere of life, Scaliger looked with envy on those who led a more active life. No doubt much of the violence of his polemics may be attributed to the fact that they were written by a man who, chained to his desk, still admired military glory. No feat of arms was more glorious to him than that of his old companions in arms who saved western civilization by defeating the Turks at the gates of Vienna. In praise of these men he wrote an oration which was completed on August 1, 1542.

Unlike his neighbors to whom the events in middle Europe were distant squabbles and unlike the Kings of France who entered into alliances with the Turks in their struggles against the Empire, Scaliger realized that the soldiers who saved Vienna had saved all of Europe. In praising them, Scaliger praised the Germanic races, looked down upon as semi-barbarians by the Latins among whom he lived. He reminded the world that it was the Germans who succeeded to the Roman Empire, that the very name France came from a Germanic tribe, the Franks, and that the great conquerors, the Normans, who still ruled in Britain, issued from the bosoms of the Germans.

Like another Tacitus, Scaliger holds up the Germans as models of virtue. It is to Germany that one must go to find saintly hospitality, domestic order, and faithfulness in observing treaties. The German women are chaste heroines who are unlike the looser women of other lands and transmit the paternal vigor unmixed to their offspring. Other nations may boast of beauty; only Germany can boast of virtue and courage. Many nations have disappeared from the earth because of corruption of morals. Germany, always virtuous, shall always stand firm.

The heroes who died before Vienna made the best possible use of life. For what glory, Scaliger asks, is equal to that of dying in defense of liberty, honor, and virtue?⁸

² Ernest Gaullieur, 1884: 69-70.

³ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

⁴ *Poemata* 1: 156, 1600.

⁵ Ernest Gaullieur, 1884: 71-72.

⁶ Théodore de Bèze, 1883-1884: 1: 44.

⁷ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Scaliger*.

⁸ *Epistolae* 352-405, 1600. Joseph felt that his father was too lavish in his praises of "these coarse Germans" (1667,

The Germans were far enough from Agen to be admired. Yet, Scaliger reserved his particular affection for his fellow countrymen. Thus, though Scaliger's poems are full of his despair at the barbarism of the Agenais he did not mean these remarks to include the Italian colony of the city. It was his great good fortune to have a most congenial spirit in the person of a celebrated Italian novelist, Matteo Bandello, a Dominican monk, whom he had known in Mantua and who, when he met him again, soon made Scaliger realize that his prejudice against the monks could not be applied to all of them.

Scaliger and Bandello were frequent guests at the house of a lady who was to play a large part in the former's life. Her name was Costanza Rangona. Her story was one to touch Scaliger's heart. Her husband was of the famous Genoese family of Fregoso, descendant of the Doge of that city and by profession a condottiere. He was raised at the court of France and was a loved and trusted companion of Francis I. His services for the French King were many and notable. In the struggle that took place in Italy between Francis and the Emperor Charles V, Genoa could never make up its mind which side it was on. One faction in the city opposed the French, another the Emperor, and civil war was the result of any attempt to place Genoa firmly in one political camp. In 1527 the city was temporarily under the rule of the Doge Antoniotto Adorno, a satellite of the Emperor. The French Vice-Regent, Lautrec, the same one under whom Scaliger served, put the navy under the command of the Genoese Admiral, Andrea Doria, and the land troops under Cesare Fregoso. A double attack on the city was a complete success. The partisans of Doria and Fregoso rose in support of the attacking parties and the city surrendered to the French.⁹ Fregoso was a patron of Bandello and in the intervals of campaigns entertained him at the famous castle on Lake Garda, the family home of the Scaligers.

In June 1541 Francis sent Fregoso and Captain Antoine Rancin as envoys to Venice and Constantinople. Because Rancin was an exceedingly corpulent man the two ambassadors decided to reach their destinations by descending the river Po in a boat. Guillaume Du Bellay had warned them that they were in danger from the Imperial Governor of Milan, the Marquis del Vasto, who intended to murder them in order to get their dispatches for the Emperor. Fregoso knew del Vasto and could not believe he would be guilty of so heinous an offense against the law of nations, but he took the precaution of sending their written instructions back to Du Bellay for safekeeping. Not far from Paris the ambassadors were ambushed and murdered. The crime

shocked all Europe, and was the direct cause of Francis' once again declaring war on Charles V.¹⁰

The widow, Costanza Rangona Fregoso, sought refuge in Venice with her children. She was not there long before it was revealed that the Viennese authorities had discovered a plot of her husband to reveal the decisions of the Council of Ten to the French Government.

She was forced to flee in fear of her life. Accompanied by Bandello, now acting as her secretary, she turned to the King in whose services her husband lost his life. Francis did not forget her. He gave her the castle of Bazens near Agen and endowed her with an income sufficient to maintain a stately position.¹¹ She came to Agen in 1542.

Scaliger fell in love with her, poetically at least. It is difficult to know how sincere his passion was, since he merely may have been using the lady as an excuse to write well-turned Latin verses. Perhaps it was the influence of Bandello, a man his own age, who was writing a series of verses addressed to the famous Lucrezia Gonzaga. Scaliger admired Bandello's verses though his friend wrote in Italian, not in Latin, and he wrote him several Latin verses praising his poetry. Perhaps Scaliger felt that love for Costanza Rangona would enable him to do as well in his chosen Latin. He did not fail to try. His collected poems are full of verses to this lady and her name appears more often than that of any other of his poetic loves. In his *Thaumantia* the marvel is none other than the lady herself. He showers on her the thousand compliments which poets have showered on their ladies. He will never lose sight of the ring she gave him. He begs her not to look in the mirror or she will fall in love with herself. Finally, and this is the greatest compliment, he prefers his position as her lover to having the throne on which Matthias Corvinus Scaliger had sat in Hungary. Much of this is traditional, but it is not entirely mental. He asks for the final favor a lady grants her lovers. Since he has called her his divinity, the lady answers, "If I am a divinity, I have no body . . . what do you want?" He answers her: "You were kind enough to say that I was another self of yours; in this case, cease a moment to be you and become me; you will continue to enjoy the privileges of a Goddess; you will give."¹²

Though Costanza was probably a beautiful lady, a good deal of Scaliger's admiration was for her noble birth, her bravery in war, and particularly the kind fate that brought her to Agen. The letter that he attaches to the collection of poems that he sends her makes this clear. We paraphrase it:

To the highest birth you add the purest virtue: these two great advantages were supported by the glorious monuments of your ancestors. Your brothers added to their laurels, fortune finally came to crown so much felicity. It

under word *Alemands*). Indeed, Scaliger himself was harsh with them when writing against the "German" Erasmus.

⁹ Martin and Guillaume Du Belay, 1908-1919: 2: 53-54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4: 3-13.

¹¹ R. L. Douglas, Introduction, Bandello, 1898: xx.

¹² *Poemata* 1: 233, 1600.

was not enough, and you find means to procure for yourself a new treasure. From your most tender youth you announced what you were to be some day. It is not astonishing that one saw shine in you the grace of modesty, it is the virtue of women, it is the first ornament with which nature embellishes them. An advantage much rarer, not only for women, but for men also, is courage; and already all Italy admires it in you. You add to that, O divine Rangona, a prudence which has not waited for the years: in your spring yet, you are the Council, you are the Senate of Ferrara. Ah! if Verona had but been inspired by you, she would be free. The brave ones who followed the flags of the fortunate Fregoso, your husband, did not get so much fire from his eyes, as they did from yours. He is no longer, that hero honored by your hand, he has fallen under the daggers of the brigands; but with what magnanimity you supported this loss which excited your tears and those of Italy. With what secret charm you raised the courage of your friends, and brought back the hope which was no more. The soldiers had lost their father, Italy its defender, Mars his emulator: but you appear, and this great loss is immediately replaced before all. You scatter love of virtue in the ranks. The veterans, bowed down with years and wounds, come to put themselves under your flag. In this great war, of which you were the sole general, you had an advantage over all generals of the world. The most beautiful of women banished the license of one camp, and a whole army became pure as she was, in spite of all the desires which she inspired. A new Hannibal, you had the talent to hold together so many diverse peoples, so many discordant characters, so many opposed interests. Nature having accorded everything to you, you also put all its gifts in use to recompense all these virtues, to present them all to us. Whoever implored in vain your good faith, your justice, your generosity, your commiseration? What kindnesses do I not owe you myself, and with what interest you wished to repair my fortune, after all the losses undergone by my ancestors. I thought at first that you helped misfortunes only because you had been unhappy yourself, and I did not know that it was from healthy literature and philosophy that you drew your beautiful principles of humanity. It is from being near you that I am convinced that the greatest need of your sublime soul was to do good.

I owe to you alone, Madame, the repose and tranquillity which I enjoy among kings and princes, and out of gratitude, I have attempted to render myself worthy of such goodness by my literary labors. If I have not sent you instead the fruit of my labors on Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle, Theophrastus (of which you speak to me with so much grace in all your letters), it is that I should like to truly merit the flattering conception you have of it. Receive, however, the homage that I address to you today of a lighter and more pleasing work, not in order to console you for the sorrows of life—you have no more—and the heavens will be constantly serene for you; it is only a symbol of my gratitude that I send you. Poetry ought not to be anything else than an animated and living picture of agreeable objects, in order to dissipate the rust and the boredom of the human soul. You will, unquestionably, find in my collection certain subjects a bit too gay, but it is to your indulgence that I present them.¹⁸

Scaliger dedicates his *Heroines* to Matteo Bandello, but instead of invoking a god or goddess he invokes the wonderful Costanza Rangona, his own divinity. He praises not only her but her daughters, who bear the unusual names of Adamantia, Junipera, and An-

gelica. Adamantia has the charm of Venus; Junipera is another Juno, but sweeter; and Angelica is the Goddess Athena who fought side by side with her mother.¹⁴ It has been hinted, on the basis of no real evidence, that of one of these descendants Scaliger was the father.¹⁵ So many poems did Scaliger write for his Goddess that few readers would have the patience to read them all. Fortunately, it is not necessary. One more, freely translated, will give the tone and style of all of them:

Why, after having reaped so many laurels, after having sung the most generous harvestings of kings and the most brilliant planets of the heavens, does my soul take still a higher fling? From whence comes this turmoil which agitates my senses? Before I had not then been at my highest, when I thought myself already crowned with the most beautiful laurel of Pindar! My feet were but at the beginning of my career! I remained beneath myself! I feel all my grandeur now. The predominating planet of Costanza shines in my eyes, the only planet which the ancient world lacked, the one which gives the last lustre to our century, the one which could prevent the ruin of the universe.

How to describe her in her entirety? O woman in front of whom all other women disappear, powerful genius which meditates and propounds but divine things, at the sight of all the virtues which present themselves to my soul, I find myself with an embarrassment of riches, and my weakness can but sketch some of your features. Never in you did clemency take away the rights of justice, though it always weighs on your magnanimous heart like a light burden, like an indispensable need.

She groans, this powerless fortune, over the vain blows which she showered upon you; and you, my Rangona, you remain unshakeable, you feel no wound, you continue to keep your victorious soul under the menacing weapons of virtue, without ever ceasing to show a serene and sweet face to the whole world. This celestial sweetness which so becomes you seems to become greater in the midst of your ruins. Your beauty does not change in your misfortune any more than your majesty does: you are the true Goddess of Triton, when she deposed her arms. . . . Apollo inspires all his favorites for you, adorable Costanza. . . . You do not come from a mortal seed; and the happy Blanche, in giving birth to you, allied for eternity the planets of the Bentivoglios to those of the Rangonas. Jupiter gave you that celestial beauty, that dazzling whiteness, that breast of ivory, that ravishing body, that sublime soul, that procession of all the virtues which we see shining in you. Juno gave you her bearing and her majestic brow. Venus gave you all her charms, to which you were able to add a still more seducing decency. One true marvel of the world, you are still my possession! Exiled from my country, without home and without resources, I console myself from all disasters with your heart. You alone made me a poet, when I did not deserve you, when I was but the shadow of a great name. Obliged to abandon the glorious works of Mars, you relighted my soul with your own fire, you received me trembling on your generous altars. Woman, heroine, or Goddess, you are shining in beauty, in soul, and in virtue.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Poemata* 1: 357, 1600.

¹⁵ Abbé, J. M. L. Coupé, 1795-1800: 15: 142. Although he romanticizes Scaliger's relations with his lady friends, Coupé's work is useful as giving detailed consideration and paraphrase to a number of Scaliger's poems and letters.

¹⁶ *Poemata* 1: 437-438, 1600.

These poems to Costanza Rangona will give the reader some idea of the quality of Scaliger's verse if he turns to the Latin originals in the bulky *Poemata* of over a thousand pages which Scaliger's son Joseph edited after his father's death. There, too, he will find the poems we have cited for the purposes of this biography and many others which give a reflection of Scaliger's personality and thoughts.

One is impressed, if not by the poetry, at least by the vigor of the mind behind it. A thread of stoicism runs throughout the poems and we see the old warrior refusing to bow to the ills of age and flesh with a courage which would be more admirable if it were less conscious. Strongest is the note of aristocratic individualism. Scaliger praises himself and his friends, because they are *his* friends, and condemns his enemies wholesale because they are *his* enemies.¹⁷

We also find reflections of his philosophical and political attitudes. He attacks Plato for banishing the poets from his republic¹⁸ and Lucretius for his materialism.¹⁹ He praises princes and scorns the people. And partially as a result of this attitude he finds good in Rome and evil in Athens. Rome is placed so high above the other cities of the world for her triumphs that Scaliger declares she is not a city as others are but a world.²⁰ Of Athens and her democracy Scaliger can write :

Of commonwealths both true or feigned
O'er which the mob in folly reigned,
None was like Athens. Surely, she
Ranked first in demagoguery.
The people led by knaves deprives
Of wealth, of country, and of lives
The better sort; yet nothing gains.
The leaders take all for their pains.²¹

Although Scaliger's poetry received the usual high-flown praise of his own and his son's friends, it is interesting to note that the generations that follow were exceedingly impatient of it. Ménage says of it: "There is hardly a more wretched book. We can hardly find

¹⁷ For instance, to the famous doctor of Lyons, Symphorien Champier, is devoted this poem: "If you want to know what Champier is, I'll reply in a few words after the manner of Scaevela. He is an unworthy busy-body, insolent, puffed up with arrogance and pride, and strutting with his title of *premier* doctor because he is the God of the wicked. He hasn't a grain of sincerity in his soul. Falsifier, but envious and inept, he has put his name on the works of others, having care to change several words here and there, as if to show he had put his hand there. But what will you say when you know that he has changed his name of Champier to Campège? And you remain silent, Democritus, and you sleep, and you do not burst with laughter?" (*Poemata* 1: 662, 1600). Needless to say, Paul Allut, Champier's biographer, is annoyed at this poem and says that if anyone was a falsifier it was this Bordoni who called himself a Scaliger (1859: 55-60).

¹⁸ *Poemata* 1: 13, 1600.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1: 544.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2: 171.

four or five epigrams which can past muster." For Huet, Scaliger has dishonored Parnassus by publishing his "rude and formless" poems. Even the age which most honored his *Poetics* could find little favorable to say about his poems.

Strangely, modern critics have been kinder. Mark Pattison writes: "The prosody and grammar of these effusions are far from exemplary, but there is a command of the resources of the Latin vocabulary which we may seek in vain in the thinner diction of the best modern Latinists."²² The latest study of Scaliger's poetry is that of his *Manes Catulliani* by Karl Pomeroy Harrington. After speaking of Scaliger's coinage of diminutive nouns, Harrington concludes: "In general, however, Scaliger uses classical Latin and seems as much at home in it as if he were threading the narrow streets of the Subura or lounging on some porch at Tibur—better Latin in the sixteenth century than most people wrote at the end of the Roman Empire."²³ Here is one poem of Scaliger, "To His Thrush," which Harrington finds approaches Catullus much nearer than have most of the other imitators throughout the centuries.²⁴ Quotation in the original will show the justice of this remark.

Ad Turdum Suum

Dulci Turdule docte gutturillo
Asperas animi levare curas,
Cantillans modulos minutiores:
Condito mihi pectoris medullas,
Cantiuncula ut inquietiore
Oblitus veterum miser malorum
Mentis improbus acquiescat aestus.
Da mi blandula murmurilla mille,
Mille anfractibus implicata: quod sit
Pote eludere vortices Charybdis.
O princeps avium beatiorum,
Quot grato dominum excitant susurro,
Rex nostrae volucelle vocis almae,
Dulci Turdule docte gutturillo.²⁵

Bandello, fond of Scaliger's poetry, and a poet himself, is now best known for his short novels. Though some are dull, many of Bandello's stories are delightful. A good deal of the pleasure comes from the feeling on the part of the reader that it was with such stories that the ladies and gentlemen of the time entertained themselves. Such, at least, is the impression Bandello strives for. Many of his stories, for instance, are represented as being told at the castle of Bazens to the Italian society that met there at the invitation of Costanza Rangona, and others take place in the districts around Agen.²⁶

²² Pattison, 1889: 1: 135.

²³ K. P. Harrington, 1931-1932: 610.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 608.

²⁵ *Poemata* 1: 602, 1600.

²⁶ It has often been said that Bandello's historical settings must be used with great discretion, but Bandello's descriptions of the society gathered around Costanza Rangona fit in with Scaliger's own poems and letters. Further, it is reasonable to assume that

Bandello's friend, Scaliger, holds a respected place in this society. Several times he is mentioned in the dedications that precede each story. In a dedication to the Lord Count Niccolo d'Arco, Bandello declares he has helped the count toward immortality since "moved by my testimony, Signor Julius Caesar Scaliger hath given you an honorable place among his heroes, as at my instance he hath done with others and [in the *Heroines*] with certain most lovesome ladies."²⁷

Nor does Bandello fail to give his friend a rank among the great men who are honored by dedications.

Bandello

to the right magnificent and excellent in every branch of learning, Signor Julius Caesar Scaliger.

There use oftentimes to betide certain unlooked for circumstances, against which the wisest man alive might uneth avail to provide, and yet bytimes a sudden chance will in a trice solve the whole difficulty. Now, if this, as is daily seen, happen in various cases, it appeareth walth to occur with most frequency in love-matters; wherefore, there being a very goodly company of Gascon gentlemen and fairest ladies come with Madame Costanza Rangona e Fregosa, my patroness, to the Château de Bassens, to enjoy its agreeable situation and the freshness of the air in the fashious season of the dog-days, and it being discoursed, at the time of the midday-rest, of untoward love-chances, Messer Girolamo Aieroldo, a Milanese gentleman and master of the horse to the most serene King of Navarre, seeing, after the matter had been variously debated, that well-nigh every one was silent, said, "I purpose to tell you an adventure which befell no great while agone in Gascony and whereby you will see that chance or fortune whiles applieth a remedy and provideth against a difficulty in cases where Solomon with all his wisdom had been lost. But, for apt considerations, I will suppress the true and proper names of the persons concerned and will avail myself of the feigned names." Accordingly, he to the pleasure of the worshipful company, related his story in the French language, there being none of us Italians but understandeth that tongue, for the long sojourn we have made here. I that same day wrote down the story related by Aieroldo and resolved that it should be seen under your learned name, not, certes, that I am so fond as to account the thing worthy of your merit, of your learning and of your ancient and noble lineage, but to certify you, by this slight mark of respect, of the desire of my soul, which would fain avail to do you a far greater honour, knowing you to be deserv-

his comments on Agen are accurate since the stories were written there and read by his Agenais friends.

It is also stated that Bandello did not come to Agen until 1542, but there is considerable evidence that he was there, at least on a long visit, in the 30's. In one of his poems he speaks of Scaliger's book against Erasmus as having just come out (Bandello, 1934-1935: 2: 944-945) and Scaliger sends him a letter on this matter (Scaliger, 1621, *Epistolae*, letter 16). Further Bandello tells us in his preface to Niccolo d'Arco that Scaliger included d'Arco in his *Heroes* at Bandello's request (see Scaliger's *Poemata* 1: 296). *Heroes* also contains a poem about Bandello (*Poemata* 1: 304). The *Heroes* was first published in 1539. The next biographer of Bandello should be able to find official documents showing that he came to Agen before 1542.

²⁷ Bandello, 1890: 4: 120-121. For the convenience of readers I have used Payne's English translation of Bandello's Italian. It is amusing to note that Payne says that Scaliger's praises of these lovesome ladies are "probably in his great work upon Latin literature, *De causis linguae latinae*, 1540" (f. n., p. 121).

ing, for your innumerable gifts, of every great thing. Fare you well.²⁸

It is most significant that Bandello, who knew all of Scaliger's claims to be descended from the Della Scalas, Princes of Verona, should here openly speak of Scaliger's "ancient and noble lineage." Who was in a better position to know the truth than Bandello who lived in Verona from 1529 to 1536, who was intimately connected with noble houses of Italy, and who actually resided for some time with the Fregoso's at Garda where Scaliger said he was born?²⁹

We are grateful to Bandello for the glimpses he gives us of Scaliger as a highly respected member of the local nobility. At one time we see him in the presence of Costanza Rangona and her son's governor, Messer Gian Pietro Usperto, discoursing of the superstitious follies of the day, and making fun of the conjurations and magical practices that were so popular.³⁰ At another we find him, retired with Costanza Rangona to Bazens to escape the heat of the summer, telling a story to entertain the ladies and gentlemen present.³¹ The story Scaliger tells is a long version of the twenty-third story of the *Heptameron*. Scaliger may have heard this from Marguerite, Queen of Navarre herself, or Bandello may merely have used Scaliger as a cover for his borrowing from a manuscript of the *Heptameron* that came into his hands.

The story is of a wicked friar who "by practice taken amorous pleasure of a Lady, whence there ensueth the death of three persons." The story need not concern us, but the way Bandello has Scaliger tell the story does. In his character as a doctor, Scaliger declares that it is better that they tell each other stories at noon, then take a siesta, since sleeping at midday

is apt to be the cause of many ailments, the which, although they be not presently felt, are often used, as men grow towards old age, to send us their harbingers, in the guise of catarrhs, rheumatic humours and pains and other affectations, and hourly to redouble in severity and irksomeness.

He makes a declamation about love.

I doubt not [he says,] that love is a holy thing, divine and necessary unto us mortals; nay, without love, our life were as the sky without stars and sun. That from love all good proceeds, all virtues spring, all fair usances are formed, and that it is in sooth the sweetest condiment of human life, without which everything were insipid, joyless and undelightsome, whoso doubteth or denieth would question whiteness in snow and heat midmost the fire.

After some more talk about the evils that come from love, the "true love, the son of Venus Celestial" and the "false cupid, born of Venus Terrestrial," he begins the

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4: 84-86.

²⁹ Bandello's acceptance of Scaliger's noble descent is considered extremely strong proof of its truth by Joseph Scaliger (1617: 269-270) and the authors of the mss. lives in collections of the American Philosophical Society.

³⁰ Bandello, 1890: 5: 303.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 3: 303-340.

actual story. Before he does, however, we have seen him in the role of physician and lover as his friend Bandello saw him.³²

Scaliger does not fail to repay Bandello with equal praise. Since Bandello's verse is, at the best, merely adequate, Scaliger's compliments must be attributed to his strong friendship rather than to his critical sense. These flatteries of his may be, as De Santi suggests, that "wine of Agen" which according to Rabelais intoxicates Bandello.³³ It is, at any rate, a heady wine. Cupid's work is done for him, when Bandello writes, declares Scaliger :

When tuneful Bandel sings of tender hearts,
Attentive Cupid drops his useless darts.³⁴

Nay more, Bandello's songs turn his subjects into deities and make of the poet himself a god :

Greatest of Phoebus' sons and Virgil's peer
Whose Lydian vein doth run with nectar clear,
From whence does love blow you that mighty draft
That with full breath the God of Love doth waft?
Lucretia is great and you are great,
Did you she, or she you, so elevate?
While your smooth numbers grant her heaven's prize,
The poet himself is rising to the skies.
Thus while you make of her a Goddess, she
For this rare song makes you a deity.³⁵

In one of Bandello's poems we are given a charming sketch of the garden Scaliger had built on his property. Here he contemplates and cultivates the muses in the company of Andiette.³⁶ Bandello must have visited him in this unequalled spot. According to his own testimony he submitted his poems to Scaliger, "the most learned of the nobility and the most noble of the learned" for his corrections.³⁷

Bandello was made Bishop of Agen in 1550, a fact which has delighted those to whom it is amusing to think that many of his scandalous and amoral stories were written while he held that office. He and Scaliger exchanged poems and letters and looked upon each other as kindred spirits.³⁸ When Scaliger died Ban-

³² Although Bandello is writing a novel, this speech of Scaliger rings true. It expresses a conception of love, partly platonic, partly "courtly love" that he held. In one of his poems, Scaliger says, "He who defined love as a simple desire did not know anything about this beautiful sentiment and enjoyment was enough for him. . . . What then is love? It is affection exclusively of the soul which attracts us toward an enchanting object. It is only when the object is absent that love becomes desire. And, too, in a soul really loving, the ravishing image of the absent one takes the place of its presence; and the soul, in spite of distance, always insinuates itself into the loved one's soul. It would not know how to remain alone; it attaches itself to that which it adores through roads impenetrable to any other power than that of feeling . . ." (*Poemata* 1: 14-15, 1600).

³³ De Santi, 1905: p. 36.

³⁴ *Poemata* 1: 304, 1600.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 162-163.

³⁶ Bandello, 1934-1935: 2: 944. See also 2: 847, 1085, and 1200 for other poems about Scaliger.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2: 835.

³⁸ For their exchanges on the death of Fracastoro, whom both admired greatly, see Scaliger's *Epistolae*, 186-190, 1600.

dello wrote two sonnets to immortalize him. In one he is called a "miracle of nature" because in his one body resided five souls—a reference to his many and varied activities.³⁹ The other is no less laudatory.

While mighty Julius of the Scaligers
So many lofty heroes sweetly sings,
He, first of poets now, to heaven wings
And on their glory living fame confers.

O happy he, who sees and never errs
Who truer life than life to dead men brings
Although his body frail and suffering
Proud death in gloomy sepulture interts.

And if he more than life to dead men gives,
What boots it since his soul has left behind
Its infirm veil, and now dwells in the sky?

O well born soul, O pious, sacred mind.
Although today thy name in glory lives,
Lo, all men know that it will never die.⁴⁰

XIV. FATHER AND SONS

Sylvius, who was born in 1530, had now reached the age when his father felt that he should be sent off to school. As he looked around for a place to send his son, he must not have hesitated long before choosing the College of Guyenne in Bordeaux. He had been in friendly relations with the professors of the College for almost a decade, as may be seen by a letter addressed to him by Robert Britannus on the subject of a young nephew of Scaliger who was at Bordeaux, and knew of the deservedly fine reputation of the college.¹ Indeed, few schools of France were more flourishing. In 1534 the Portuguese André de Gouvéa, who was directing the College of Sainte-Barbe at Paris, was asked to come to Bordeaux and restore the study of letters in that city. He accepted, and being eminently qualified for the task, soon had gathered around him a group of professors who represented much of what was best in the thought of the time. The result was a wave of enthusiasm for learning. As Britannus wrote :

If you want news of the college, I can tell you that it has liberally and seriously entered on a flourishing course, thanks to the activity of André de Gouvéa, already noted for the way he has administered the head-mastership. The professors are learned, grave men. The enrollment is already very large. From this we may hope before long to see flourish in this institution eloquence and the cult of polite literature.²

Another of Scaliger's friends, the Scotsman George Buchanan, was a teacher at the college though he left before Sylvius entered. Their friendship shows that Scaliger was perfectly able to become intimate with men of superior ability. Certainly he felt no jealousy of Buchanan's superior poetic gifts and the two men exchanged poems and letters in the best humanist fashion. Joseph Scaliger carried on his father's admiration for

³⁹ Bandello, 1934-1935: 2: 1200.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 1199.

¹ Robert Britannus, 1540: f°. 77.

² *Ibid.*, f°. 46.

Buchanan and named him the best Latin poet in the whole of Europe. The Elegy he wrote on Buchanan is famous :

Raised to her zenith, poetry no more
Beyond thee tries on daring wing to soar,
Bounds to her Empire, Rome in Scotland found,
And Scotland too her eloquence shall bound.³

In his poem addressed to the youth of Bordeaux, Buchanan expresses the generous enthusiasm for letters which animated him and his fellow teachers at the College of Guyenne :

Navarre, nurse of heroic sons,
Land of the generous vine,
Thee Ceres dowers, Minerva shuns
For thee her Grecian shrine.

Of what avail the stricken field
With brilliant triumph crowned,
The fame that olden glories yield,
In series long renowned?

If from the Muse thou turn away,
Nor Learning's gifts acclaim,
Vain in the zeal that would essay
To win enduring fame.

No Parian columns towering high,
Nor Myro's bronze hath power
Nor Phidias' long lived ivory,
To 'scape Oblivion's hour.

Man's laboured work Death levels low,
Power fails, pomp disappears,
The rocks asunder cleft must bow
To all-devouring years.

Though Vulcan and the Queen of Heaven
Conspired proud Ilium's fall,
In Homer's muse see guerdon given,
Atonement made for all.

Now Troy resurgent would disdain
In lieu, imperial sway
From farthest India's fervid plain
To snows of Rhodope.

The poet's art alone can rise
Above Fate's stern decree,
Alone Oblivion despise
And Hell's dread mastery.⁴

In spite of the distance to Agen and the poor roads, Buchanan and the other professors made it a habit to visit Scaliger at his home, particularly during the wine festival.⁵ Since Scaliger seldom travelled and since he loved literary conversation, these visits must have been the social highlights of his year. Once he had the great misfortune not to be at home after Buchanan had ploughed through the wintry road to Agen. Buchanan wrote a poem on the visit in which he claimed that only the thought of the brilliant conversation he would have had with Scaliger kept his spirits up on the journey. Not finding Scaliger at home, he waited five days before he had to leave without seeing him. This disappoint-

ment, he wrote, far outweighed the fatigues of the journey.⁶

Surely such journeys were a tribute to Scaliger's conversational powers. The roads were so bad they gained notoriety. A story is told of a magistrate who was sent to take charge of the district. Having arrived one afternoon at Port Sainte-Marie, he asked if he were near Agen. Being told that the city was two leagues distant he decided to push on in spite of a warning that the roads were bad. After a terrifying journey he reached Agen at midnight with his horses fatigued and his servants ill. The next morning when he called the court together he made it put on official record that henceforth the distance from Port Sainte-Marie to Agen was six, not two, leagues.⁷

Sylvius arrived at the College of Guyenne on June 11, 1544, when he was fourteen years old. Since he had had previously the benefits of being taught both by Sarrazin and his father, he probably entered the school with an equipment more than equal to that of his contemporaries. He stayed as an *interne* at the College until November 16 of the same year, when for some reason his father removed him and boarded him at the home of a priest, Raymond de Labbadie. Though removed as a boarder from the College, Sylvius no doubt followed the courses as an *externe*.⁸ Thus, Sylvius was at the school at the same time as a younger boy, Michel de Montaigne, who entered the College in 1539 at the age of six and stayed there until he was thirteen.

We do not know what class Sylvius entered but, whatever one he did, he studied Latin. The Latin classics made up almost the entire curriculum as we know from actual documents. In the seventh, sixth, and fifth classes, the students studied grammar and read Cicero with a play or two of Terence or a letter by Ovid thrown in for relaxation. In the fourth class, Cicero still reigned supreme but longer themes in Latin were required. Nor were the authors changed for the third; at this stage the students were permitted, or rather required, to write Latin verses. In the second class Latin history was studied, and the art of oratory in the first.⁹

Narrow though this series of studies seems, it was a liberal curriculum for the time. Julius Caesar Scaliger could not have but felt that the sciences and mathematics should have been present and we know he protested to the professors that the little Greek taught was insufficient.¹⁰ Yet, on the whole, he seemed satisfied enough with the instruction at this Bordeaux institution to send his younger sons there when they grew up.

Scaliger would hardly have sent his sons away to school if he had had the time to continue their education

³ Quoted by D. Macmillan, 1906: 80. See also Joseph Scaliger, 1670, under word *Buchananus*.

⁴ Translated by R. S. Charles in David Millar, 1907: 268.

⁵ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 46-47.

⁶ *Epigrammaton* 1: xl ix, in George Buchanan, 1715.

⁷ Jacques de Thou, 1740: 43.

⁸ Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 50-51 gives the details of Sylvius' school career, which he is able to trace by the dated receipts for tuition.

⁹ Louis Massebieau, 1886: *passim*.

¹⁰ Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 54.

himself. To be sure, he gave instruction in medicine but whether he actually ran a formal school is questionable. It is more likely that young men interested in medicine and letters who were attracted by Scaliger's fame had the same sort of relationship with him that young men of the last century in our own country did toward the established lawyers and doctors under whom they "read." The relationship was a domestic one. The young men were treated as members of the family and Scaliger called them his sons. They spread out from Agen all over France and many, says Joseph, became celebrated doctors.¹¹

Among the young men whose intellectual life Scaliger helped shape, the most famous, in his own day, if we omit Joseph Scaliger, was a young man with the name of Muret. Marcus Antonius Muretus, as he called himself, became the most famous Latinist of Europe. Montaigne prided himself on having had him as a teacher.¹² His style was by universal agreement considered the best since Cicero. Everyone listened to him not because of what he said but because of the incomparable way he said it.¹³ As late as 1882, Pattison's article in the *Times* suggested that for training in good Latin style, Muret should be put into the hands of English schoolboys.¹⁴ Muret first visited Scaliger when he was eighteen and again two years later. In all probability there were other trips which were not recorded. Although Muret never seems to have stayed very long on any of these trips, they were important for his development. He felt himself in an atmosphere where he was appreciated and understood. Scaliger called him "my son" and his boys called him "brother."¹⁵ With one of them, Joseph, Muret kept up a respectful friendship in spite of their differences in religion. When Muret was not in Agen he kept in touch with Scaliger, the father, by correspondence.¹⁶

Muret is warmly appreciative of what Scaliger taught him and his admiration for him knows no bounds. He dedicates his epigrams to him in words that are hyperbolic but undoubtedly sincere. Scaliger may be a leader and prince to others; to Muret he is almost a god.¹⁷ He asks the muse what name he shall call him by, worthy of his talents, and the muse replies, "call him Scaliger; that name contains all virtues in itself."¹⁸ If it were allowed he would build a temple and altars to this godlike man. Yet, it would be a work of supererogation since the gods have made the heavens a temple and the earth an altar for Scaliger.¹⁹ He calls Euterpe, the muse of lyric song, his sister. Let her not be aston-

ished. He has every right to his claim. Julius Caesar Scaliger calls him son.²⁰

Because his poetry pleases Scaliger, it is dear to him though he knows it is mediocre. He searches for a gift to give Scaliger because Scaliger has deigned to accept his verses. He thinks of praising him in poetry but decides that if he introduced so weighty a name his light bark of verse would sink beneath the waves. The only compliment worthy of Scaliger is silence since it shows that one has said enough when one realizes that one cannot say enough in praise of such a man.²¹

Scaliger's relations with his "sons" were of this happy character. We have a letter of his to one of them, Gervase Marsteller, a doctor. In it we see that the teacher could be as profuse in the compliments of the age as could his pupils. He writes that the only thing that relieves his sorrow over Marsteller's departure are the letters he receives from him. He praises his style as being like a woman who is beautiful without rouge, unlike the style of so many others of the day who forget content in seeking after stylistic effects.

The whole tone of the letter exemplifies Scaliger's paternal attitude toward young scholars. He praises Marsteller for the botanical researches he has made and he feels no jealousy that his student has found specimens he does not possess. Nature, he points out, is productive of infinite variety. Nor should one scientist hoard his discoveries of herbs of medicinal value. He should let them be known so that his research will outlive his own life and so that other men may add their new bits of knowledge to them. The hope of adding knowledge is what makes life worth living. "For the more we know, the more we are like God." Nothing is more divine than liberty of research unfettered by superstition.

His letter contains praises of his correspondent's poems and ends with a little anecdote of a visit made him by a Bishop. It ends with the courteous words, "I kiss your divine hands, my son."²²

Early in 1548 we find his true son, Sylvius, in Paris. No doubt his father felt that he had received all the education that the local professors were capable of imparting and that it was time for him to continue his studies in the capital. Further, growing troubles in Bordeaux made the city dangerous. In January 1549 Sylvius entered the class of M. Meole Thomas at the College of Navarre, where he stayed for slightly over a year. He made progress in letters, but we have evidence that he learned other things, too. Particularly how to contract debts.

Although his father was by this time a fairly rich man, Sylvius did not feel his allowance sufficient for the life he wanted to lead at Paris. He began borrowing sums from his mother's wealthy cousin, Pierre de Secondat,

¹¹ Joseph Scaliger, 1670, under word *Aginni*.

¹² *Essais* 1: 25.

¹³ Mark Pattison, *Times*, August 23, 1882: 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Muretus*.

¹⁶ Charles Dejob, 1881: 4.

¹⁷ Muret, 1834: 2: 272.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2: 277.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 281.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 293.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2: 276-277.

²² J. C. Scaliger, 1621, *Epistolae*, letter 18.

general-treasurer of the finances of France in the Duchy of Guyenne. In his first year in Paris he managed to borrow five or six times from the General de Secondat and at least once from a merchant, Gilles de Lannoy. This habit never left Sylvius. Even after he had inherited the family property, he continued to borrow, and his borrowing stopped only with his death.

When Sylvius left the College of Navarre his final account shows that he was living like a young heir. He felt the need, for instance, of a silk robe and vest to play his role properly. An idea of the prices he paid for certain objects may be seen from this account. A pair of boots cost him twenty-seven sols, hose nine, a sword thirty-two, a horse twenty-four, and food for the horse sixty sols a day.²³

Yet, Sylvius was not sent to Paris so that he could clatter around on a horse, jingling his spurs and showing off his finery. He was sent to study. And not in vain. Sylvius became a learned man with particular inclinations toward the natural sciences. Although he never published anything original, he did edit two works left behind by his father, and was always interested in learning and learned men.²⁴

If we are to believe what he says in the preface, Scaliger's famous *Poetics* was written in order to help Sylvius in his studies. This being so we can, though it was not published until three years after Scaliger's death, date its conception and probably part of its execution from this period when Sylvius was still a student. It is evident that Scaliger looked upon his *Poetics* as the next book needed for Sylvius' education after his *Principles of the Latin Language*.²⁵ The preface is replete with Scaliger's tender concern for Sylvius. It begins :

We have already taken pains, Sylvius, that you should enjoy the most carefully selected instruction for the first rudiments of letters. Now it remains that you should be led by no common road to the higher studies that come after. This will be greater in proportion as the latter studies are more important than the former.²⁶

But the criticisms that men have made of his *Principles of the Latin Language* still rankle. He answers

²³ All of these details are given by Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 51-53.

²⁴ The two books of his father Sylvius edited were: *Aristotelis liber qui decimus historiarum inscribitur . . . latinus factus a J. C. Scaligero . . .*, Lyons, 1584, and *Commentarii et animadversiones in sex libros de Causis plantarum Theophrasti*, Geneva, 1566. His brother Joseph's estimate, though he does admit Sylvius' learning, was colored by Sylvius' having squandered the family fortune. Sylvius was Lord of Verona, Vivès and Gohas (the last title he received from his second wife). His one appearance on the stage of history was in 1562 when he was sent by the people of Agen to Symphorien de Durfort to ask what to do about the advance of Monluc toward the city (de Bèze, 1883-1884: 2: 912).

²⁵ For a discussion of how this preface has been misunderstood see my Preface to Scaliger's *Poetics libri septem, Mod. Lang. Notes*, 60: 447-453, 1945.

²⁶ J. C. Scaliger, 1561: preface.

both those who claimed that the book was too superficial and those who said he had treated the subject matter too philosophically for the young student. Scaliger declares that he was the first really to reveal the laws of the language. His critics are merely jealous.

He then turns to the subject of his new book. It is time that Sylvius should be taught logic and oratory because they will be invaluable for him if he intends to practice law. Law, he says, is not merely obstinacy or a mass of citations. It was established for the harmony and justice of mankind, and the student of law learns good principles, not only from studying philosophy, but from reading the historians and the poets. "Those who condemn such reading are boorish, insensible, and harshly arrogant men who are not worthy to be placed in the category of human beings."

Poetry, he insists, has existed coeternally with nature itself. It is found in the songs of birds when they harmonize among themselves and make equal their inequality by a mutual exchange of sound, and in the movements of the heavenly bodies. Poetry is that which "animates matter itself, being a rhythmical harmony of unlike movements which are held in the modulations of the most trifling speech."²⁷

It is to help Sylvius in this divine study that Scaliger has undertaken this difficult task. Although some might think he had been aided by his predecessors, they were an inspiration rather than a help since Horace's *Ars Poetica* teaches artlessly, Aristotle's commentaries are fragmentary, and Vida instructs the poet who is already a poet. Thus Scaliger, happy to be the first to arrange this subject matter significantly, stakes out his claim to be the first constructor of a complete theory of poetry.

If Sylvius now trains himself with the aid of this book, he may become an example to his younger brothers, Joseph, Leonard, and John. For Sylvius need not listen to the "bloodsuckers of good fame" who deride humane letters and declare that the student should learn "practical" things. Scaliger's plea for liberal studies is eloquent.

So this, then, is the task we set for ourselves. While they devote their years to dice, or gape at gold, or snatch at government positions, or as sycophants at the tables discuss military strategy among the dishes; we shall seem neither to have scorned their pleasures nor found fault with their ambition, but rather to have been unwilling to be censured for the nobility of our pursuits and the greatness and honesty of our minds.²⁸

In the last year of his reign Francis I established a salt tax that bore heavily on the people. A feeling of popular discontent had been growing and it exploded when the next King, Henry II, came to the throne. In August 1548 the people of Saintonge rose in open revolt and the people of Bordeaux joined them. The salt tax in itself would have not been reason enough for

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

the uprising if it had not been merely the last in a series of exactions, the greatest being the tax on the city to maintain 50,000 soldiers for the army. The people attacked the arsenal of the town hall, forced it open and distributed its weapons. For a full day they were in control. Houses were seized and the lieutenant of the King of Navarre, Tristan de Monein, was killed and his corpse mutilated.

Order was restored the next day and a terrible vengeance was exacted. The King sent an army of eight thousand men, under the command of the Constable de Montmorency and the Duke d'Aumale, which occupied Bordeaux as if it had been an enemy city. The city was disarmed and a hundred and fifty citizens were put to death. Nobles were beheaded; citizens suffered on the wheel, were impaled, torn apart by four horses; and one merchant was burned at the stake.²⁹

Bordeaux had not been alone in its uprising. Neighboring cities had made movements of support. Among them was Agen which now suffered the horrors of a military occupation. All of the inhabitants were disarmed. Among the others Julius Caesar Scaliger was forced to deposit in the arsenal the weapons from his house. They consisted of a pike, a sword, and a golden dagger. This was done during the absence in Bordeaux of Francis de la Viguerie, advocate of the King. When he returned he protested to the authorities that he was grieved that such an insult had been offered to Scaliger "a gentleman of good and ancient lineage." It was officially ordered that the arms be returned to Scaliger as a gentleman who was known far and wide as a man of ancient nobility. Thus Scaliger, perhaps alone of the inhabitants of his city, was honored by being exempted from this order. None of the doubts about his nobility entered the minds of his contemporaries. To the officials of the king and province, he was a "gentleman of noble lineage."³⁰

Nor was this the only honor to come to Scaliger at this time. A few months later he received the office of doctor-in-ordinary to the King and Queen of Navarre. The original document is among his family papers and is couched in glowing terms. Henry and Marguerite declare that they have "good and entire confidence in the person of Julius Caesar, doctor of laws, Lord of Lescalle, and in his judgment, literature, sufficiency, loyalty, probity, experience and good diligence. . . ." All of the honors, rights, and liberties of the office are bestowed upon him to use and enjoy.³¹ No document could give greater pleasure to the aging scholar. In one parchment both his nobility and his skill in his chosen profession are confirmed. These honors, though

²⁹ Ernest Gaullier, 1884: 101-103; Paul Courteault, 1938: 183-185.

³⁰ Remise des armes de Jules-César Scaliger, in collections of American Philosophical Society.

³¹ Provisions de la charge de médecin ordinaire des Roi et Reine de Navarre accordée à Jules-César Scaliger, in collections of American Philosophical Society.

gratifying, did not completely console Scaliger. He felt within himself the power to play a great part on the world's stage but found himself cast in a provincial city whose inhabitants he scorned. He did not always play the role gracefully.

The best example of this may be found in his dispute with his good friend, Arnoul Le Ferron, over a legal matter that probably came up in the early 1550's. Thousands of words in the letters that have come down to us are devoted to this law suit. They do not show Scaliger at his best, and the reader cannot help but be annoyed at the space devoted to such an unimportant matter when he considers the many important things about Scaliger he wants to know which the letters do not tell him. His annoyance is increased almost to frustration when he discovers that these particular letters can only be approximately dated by internal evidence and when he strongly suspects that the order in which they are printed is not that in which they were written.

Even the parts of the lawsuit which caused the temporary breach between this new Marcus and his Atticus are not completely clear. We do know that a woman, on whom Scaliger pours all the derogatory epithets the Latin language has for the female sex, was for a time in Scaliger's house. She left and, according to Scaliger, took with her a considerable amount of his property. She denied the theft and she and Scaliger went to law about the matter.

Scaliger at first feels confident of winning his case since Le Ferron is one of the judges. He is greatly upset when his Atticus replies to his solicitations by reminding him that as a judge he cannot let his judgment be affected by his personal friendship for Scaliger. Scaliger simply refuses to understand this point of view. He is a friend of Le Ferron, he has done much for the younger man, and his money had been stolen. He pleads with Le Ferron at least to talk with the other judges about the case.³² He mentions that he has been in touch with other officials about the matter.

In order to read these letters with any degree of sympathy we must remember that the standards of justice in sixteenth-century Bordeaux, were considerably lower than they are today. For Scaliger's letters are a mixture of threats and pleadings. They are filled with bitter irony when he sees that Le Ferron will not help him. He thanks his young friend profusely for what he has not done and then destroys the irony by complaining that he is losing face among his acquaintances by Le Ferron's refusal to support him.³³

Le Ferron finally becomes irritated at Scaliger's importunities and writes him a letter in which he cleverly suggests that Scaliger is acting up over this theft as if he were a Roman senator and Hannibal were at the gates of Rome. Why cannot Scaliger apply the philosophy he so often recommends to others? Anyway,

³² *Epistolae*, letters 22 and 23, 1600.

³³ *Ibid.*, letters 24 and 31.

won't Scaliger's dear friend Costanza Rangona pay his losses?³⁴

To have the young man lecture him in this way is too much for Scaliger. He replies that he would like to be taught a philosophy that allows domestic thieves to steal the dowries of respectable girls. If Le Ferron and his fellow judges are not averse to profit why shouldn't money be dear to "exiles, needy persons, heads of large families saddled with the burden of a throng of children, sick, old, and without friends."³⁵

Worst of all is that Le Ferron should joke about the matter. "I have," Scaliger writes, "been robbed and am now ridiculed. I say to you: 'Hannibal is not, as you write, at the gates of this city, but poverty is at my door. Justice is at yours, quarreling with you.'" He would like to see Le Ferron be as philosophical and humorous if a thief had stolen a like amount from him. As for Costanza Rangona, she will probably repay Scaliger's losses, but it ill becomes Le Ferron to suggest it. If he were really a friend there would be no loss.³⁶

After further reflections on Le Ferron's betrayal of their friendship, Scaliger comments on Le Ferron's continuation of Paulus Aemilius' history,³⁷ and takes his anger at the author out on the book. He declares that it is remarkable that a book dealing with so much bloodshed could be so anemic. The book is "inept, childish, semi-barbarous, and lacks scholarship."³⁸ This he says in anger of a history that had at least one great claim to his sympathy. It devoted space to the exploits of himself, his father, and his uncle at the battle of Ravenna.³⁹

Scaliger's indignation takes, in the next letter,⁴⁰ the form of thirteen pages of invective. It is one of the letters that must have been meant when a critic declared that certain of Scaliger's letters are pure fustian.⁴¹ This one certainly is. Scaliger attempts a heavy irony. He declares that Le Ferron's letters fill him with new wisdom, that thefts must not only be endured but praised. Scaliger will have none of this new philosophy. He will stand by the wisdom of God which declares, "Domestic thieves must be punished on the cross." Nor may we doubt that he means this literally since he paints a picture of his enemy as dancing in splendid dresses (bought with Scaliger's money) and taunting Scaliger by striding by his house, her cheeks

ruddy with his blood while he sits within pale with grief.

He seems honestly to feel that his friend has used him harshly. Nor does Le Ferron's remark that, after all, he does not owe his position in the court to Scaliger, assuage his feelings. Scaliger replies that if Le Ferron had, Scaliger would have certainly seen to it that his enemy was punished—an exchange that seems to imply that a judge who owed an appointment to a friend would take care of his interests in the court. Scaliger reminds Le Ferron that his fame with posterity rests largely in Scaliger's hands. Most of all he laments that their fine friendship now seems to be broken for good. In a passage that is very revealing, he bursts out "I am Caesar; I am Scalanus; I am a very upright man; I am most innocent; I am very steadfast; I am abstemious, perhaps not even unacquainted with many sciences; I am very skilled in many languages; I am even of an opposing, envious and critical disposition contrary to my will."⁴²

Le Ferron replies that a Scaliger who has lost an empire should not be so disturbed over a mere matter of money. Scaliger answers that if he had not lost his empire he wouldn't need money. Le Ferron should give up his office. He is unworthy of it. The judge who pleads for a thieving wolf shows not the wolf's innocence but his own madness.⁴³

That after such exchanges the two men should make up and become as fast friends as ever seems without the bounds of possibility. Yet that is what happened. It is clear that though there was a real ground of disagreement neither took the other's insults too seriously. They were writing in Latin and showing off their skill in using all the insulting epithets of that language. Neither, seemingly, forgot for long that what was said was said for the mere pleasure of saying it in the prescribed polemical form.

Le Ferron, as the younger of the two, takes the first steps toward a reconciliation. He writes that he wants all to be forgotten, that it was contrary to both his character and the respect due to old age that he should attack Scaliger whom he has always considered as a father and his Sylvius as a brother. "Father," he says, "I give myself up to you, put as much burden on me as you wish; command me."⁴⁴

Scaliger is happy to renew the friendship and writes Le Ferron a kind letter. All is forgiven. Henceforth their letters are full of tender expressions toward each other and each other's wives and children.⁴⁵

XV. EDUCATION

As Scaliger grew older his thoughts turned more and more to his children. His health was becoming increas-

³⁴ *Ibid.*, letter 60.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, letter 61.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, letter 61.

³⁷ First published in 1549. This helps date the quarrel as does letter 23 where Scaliger declares he wants Joseph (b. 1540) to be a fellow student of Le Ferron's son. This hints at a date early in the 1550's. A letter to Scaliger published by Bourrousse de Laffore (1860: 56-58) shows that Scaliger is involved in a lawsuit in 1553. It may be the same suit.

³⁸ *Epistolae*, letter 61, 1600.

³⁹ Arnoul Le Ferron, 1549, f. 63b.

⁴⁰ *Epistolae*, letter 62, 1600.

⁴¹ De La Monnoye as quoted in J. P. Nicéron, 1733, 23: 274.

⁴² *Epistolae*, letter 62, 1600.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, letter 63.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, letter 64.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, letter 65.

ingly bad and, naturally enough, he had begun to put his hopes in the way his name would be carried on after his death. His books and poems, he felt sure, would live. So would his children; so, he hoped, would their achievements. Sylvius had already shown signs of instability and, though the father never allowed himself to see this clearly, he began to cultivate his younger sons with greater care.

When the time for their formal education arrived he sent them to Bordeaux, where Sylvius had gone to school for a short time. In 1552 Joseph, almost twelve years old, Leonard eleven, and John Constant, eight, were taken to that city to board at the home of Girard De Roques, a friend of the family whose brother lived at Agen.¹ As their preceptor he took them to the College of Guyenne where they followed the course for three years until the plague forced their return to Agen.² Scaliger was not one to leave all in the hands of the tutors, however. He had his own ideas as to what his children should be taught and the professors were very anxious to keep his good will. As a result a stream of letters flowed back and forth between Agen and Bordeaux. The letters written by the professors to Scaliger have fortunately been preserved and we are able by reading them not only to see reflected the anxious paternal soul of the father but to find out many exact details of the books used in the school, their prices, and other curious facts.³ Addressed to "Monseigneur, Monsieur de Lescale" is this letter from Girard De Roques:

I have received ten pistoles (the money which it pleased you to send me by the solicitor of Monsieur de Baugement) which makes sixty that I have received from you. . . . I have often given Monsieur the principal to understand the wish that you have that your children should study Greek, and I have likewise shown him your last letter which he approved of. He wants you to trust him in this, saying that in time he will bring it about so that your children will give you as much satisfaction in Greek as in Latin. He was greatly pleased that you were satisfied with their Latin. Your children themselves have taken pleasure in writing to the son of Monsieur de Vaurz to show what they are capable of and have constrained me to teach them French. Not that they have moulted their Latin; for it is their natural mode of expression. . . . I recommend myself Monseigneur to your good grace and that of Mademoiselle your wife, and the same do your children who are in good health. . . .⁴

In this one letter we can find two criticisms of the education given at the College of Guyenne. Scaliger, representing the new learning, is anxious that Greek be taught his sons, while they demand that they be given lessons in their mother tongue. Both are well satisfied with the Latin instruction but both make demands which are the forerunners of those which will eventually give

¹ Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 53-56.

² Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 50. The role of preceptor combined that of tutor and guardian. He was continuously with his pupils. (Bonnefon, 1898: 1: 33 ff.)

³ These letters were in the private possession of Bourrousse de Laffore. I have tried, in vain, to discover where they are now.

⁴ Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 54-55.

both new subjects a prominent place in the curriculums of French schools.

In other letters of this period, De Roques reveals that he is an intermediary between Counsellor Le Ferron and Scaliger and he declares that the compositions of the young Scaligers he sends to the father are left as they wrote them. He does not attempt to correct the errors they make in them, as that would give their father a false idea of their achievement.⁵ In one letter, after mentioning certain financial matters, De Roques goes on to say:

I am sending you two themes of Joseph so that you might see whether or not he has profited from the time we have spent here following the method that I use in instructing your children. One is taken from the text of their lesson concerning tenses, numbers and persons of verbs; the other without any text so that he can deal with something of his own without having recourse to anything but his own invention. . . . Also one of Leonard who can not yet write original compositions, but in time I hope to obtain the greatest satisfaction from him and the others. . . .⁶

Letters such as this were what the old man was living for. He wanted his sons not only to know, but to know better than he did. That is why he wanted them to learn Greek early and well since he had always felt handicapped by his uncertain knowledge of that language. Yet, the ability to write Latin excellently was even more important for a man's reputation, and Joseph, at least, was attaining that ability rapidly. Sylvius might gain fame but it would not be in letters; Leonard and John Constant were too young to show their qualities; but Joseph was taking the first sure steps toward achieving that to which Julius himself had devoted his life.

Not least interesting among the details of these letters are the indications of the profound respect in which Scaliger was held by members of the college. That his children profited from their father's position can be seen in another letter.

Monseigneur, I do not know what to write you that is new except that your children are in good health for which I give thanks to your lordship. The principal thinks so much of them, as he always has, that he even sends for them in class to have them taken to his own rooms in order to get warm when it is very cold. He recommends himself warmly to your indulgence, as do your children and also I, very humbly, and to Mademoiselle, praying the creator to give you, Monseigneur, all you desire. . . .⁷

Scattered through the letters are offers of respect to Scaliger from important men in Bordeaux as well as from the professors and the principal. De Roques seems to have been a good friend to Scaliger and to have kept his name before the people with whom he had anything to do. There is in this, one feels, more than the interests of a tutor in pleasing his employer. He seems to have been fond of the children and, according to his

⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

reports, they were happy at the school.⁸ Joseph's own memories of the time seem pleasant enough.

De Roques was not only a good tutor but he seems to have been Scaliger's private agent at Bordeaux. He took care, however, not to bother the old man with vexing details. Scaliger's health was failing and there seems to have been a conspiracy on the part of his friends and family to protect him from all possible annoyances. For instance, in 1553, Scaliger had a lawsuit in the Parliament of Bordeaux. His lawyer, by the way, was M. de Brach, father of Pierre de Brach, the poet. De Roques watched out for Scaliger's interests but took care to write his troublesome letters to Sylvius. A letter of his dated July 17, 1553, lets us know that Scaliger is too ill to be bothered with legal details.⁹

Scaliger's indispositions did not prevent him from keeping in close touch with his children's progress. He is as concerned that their religious education be as carefully controlled as their literary. So we must assume if we may take the following letter from De Roques as reflecting his employer's views. It is dated August 3, 1553. Since in this letter De Roques also broaches certain matters about the trial, it may be assumed that Scaliger's health was better.

Monseigneur, if you are pleased with your children, I am no less pleased to hear it and hope, God helping, to strengthen your hope. I am no less curious to accustom them to every good, holy, and catholic practice and institution which are the nurses of our faith, making us by visible evidence believe in invisible things. Happy indeed is the man who learns at an early age to carry the yoke of the Lord. This is written for no other reason than to let you know that I want to acquit myself with regard to all the conditions of my responsibility. For how would it be if your children learned in the future to nourish their bodies in honor but were ignorant of the life of the soul . . . ?¹⁰

The children were cherished not alone for their own sakes but because they were the sons of a noted man. Nothing makes this clearer than a letter written to Scaliger the ninth of December, 1553, wherein he is told that a large number of the professors of the College intend to go to Agen in body to pay their respects to him.¹¹

The professors' social status seems to have been slightly ambiguous. They expected gratuities from the parents of the children they taught. In a letter of August 31, 1553, De Roques tells Scaliger that he is sending to him certain compositions of his sons which he assures him he has not retouched. He soon allows Scaliger to see that this is not his real reason for writing. De Roques is concerned by the fact that the sons will have new instructors after the feast of St. Remy and he is not sure that they will do a good job unless they are sent the usual tips (thirty sols). He reminds his

employer that the money he sent for the previous teachers had inspired them to do their jobs with enthusiasm.¹²

Throughout the letters we learn such details as the cost of books (a Marcus Manilius costs 4 sols, a Valerius Maximus 8 sols, a dictionary 16 sols, etc., prices which would probably be about the same today in terms of purchasing power), the cost of doctor's visits when the children are sick (they are paid so little one wonders how Julius was able to make so much by his fees) and the continuing progress of the boys. One fact stands out. Joseph is doing brilliantly and all of his professors are convinced that a great career lies in front of him.¹³

On the fifth of June, 1554, Girard De Roques resigned as the preceptor of Scaliger's sons and handed them over to the care of Simon Beaupré. The latter had already been the tutor of the son of Costanza Rangona, with whom he had lived at the castle of Bazens and was intimate with Bandello, now Bishop of Agen. He became friendly with the Scaligers by bringing his pupil to Monbran to debate with Joseph. Thus, it was logical for the Scaligers to choose him as a successor to Girard De Roques when the need arose. His period of tutorship was not to last more than a month, however, since on July 6, he was called back by Madam Fregosa. After resigning, he is able to write with complete frankness to Scaliger on the learning of his former charges. "Your children have profited much from their Latin, but they know little or no Greek. You should not hope that they will ever learn Greek at Bordeaux because they make less of it there than I dare write you."¹⁴ That he was not overly pessimistic is witnessed by Joseph who writes that years after he had left school, he had to teach himself Greek.¹⁵

The boys were handed over by Beaupré to M. Laurens de Lamarque, a tutor who boasted a coat of arms. From the sixth of July 1554 to the same date in 1555 he was the preceptor of the three sons. For his services he was paid two hundred and twenty-two francs and six sols. He, too, immediately recognizes Joseph's superiority. He calls him "the flower of your children," predicts he will be a learned man and declares that he comprehends immediately whatever is taught him.¹⁶ Lamarque also reports to Scaliger the books he has bought for his three pupils. Since he also gives the prices he paid we are enabled to obtain a good idea both of the texts used at the school and the cost of books in sixteenth century Bordeaux.¹⁷

⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹² *Ibid.*, 58-59.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁴ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 51.

¹⁵ Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 60.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 61. Donald L. Clark's excellent study, *John Milton at St. Paul's school*, 1948, offers a picture of the life and curriculum at the English grammar schools which enables one to see the fundamental similarity in curriculum and aims between them and the College of Guyenne.

Epistles of Ovid (for Joseph)	20 sols
For rebinding a Virgil	1 sol
Cicero's Commonplaces	6 sols
Familiar Epistles	16 sols
Greek Grammar	6 sols
Horace	6 sols
De Viris illustribus	10 sols
De Corrupti sermonis emendatione	15 sols
Two volumes of Textor	19 sols
Letters to Atticus	28 sols
Virgil	15 sols
Melanchthon's Grammar	9 sols
Caesar's Commentaries	10 sols
Horace	6 sols
Portuguese Dictionary	30 sols
Psalms of David	12 sols
Letters to Atticus	14 sols
New Testament	15 sols
Justin	6 sols
Valerius Maximus	9 sols

Whether it was the appearance of Melanchthon's Grammar upon this list, or whether he knew of controversial books that had been put into the hands of his son, Scaliger was worried enough to write a strong letter to the school protesting against his children being exposed to dangerous writings. And, dangerous they were in a very real sense. Charles de Sainte-Marthe, Mathurin Cordier, and Claude Budin, were all under great suspicion. As early as 1541 certain of the students were arrested for holding the new tenets of the Reformation.¹⁸

In 1551 a student at the College named Pierre Souville called together an assembly of students and others at a doctor's house and openly preached the new doctrine. The court issued an order for his arrest. Warned, he fled before he could be apprehended. On December 31, 1551, a decree of Parliament summoned him to appear within three days, and, when he did not, issued another at the request of the procurator general which declared him in contempt. Then, on May 10, 1552, the court condemned him:

to ask pardon of God, of the Virgin Mary, of the King, and of Justice, being in his shirt, head and feet bare, a rope around his neck, before the church of St. Peter of Bordeaux, on a day of solemn procession. And this done, to be led before the palace royal of L'Ombrière, and there as a heretic, schismatic, and seditious person to be burned alive and his body reduced to ashes.¹⁹

Knowing that this dreadful sentence was passed upon a student at the College of Guyenne only three years previously, we can well understand the father's anxiety that his sons be free of any suspicions. This is abundantly understandable even if Scaliger himself had been in sympathy with the Reformation. No man could contemplate with equanimity the possible martyrdom of his sons. This was no matter for a mere preceptor like Laurens de Lamarque to decide and Scaliger is answered by one of the higher authorities, Baudon. He writes:

¹⁸ Ernest Gaullieur, 1874: 239.

¹⁹ Archives départementales de la Gironde, quoted by Gaullieur, 1874: 241.

I have seen the letters you wrote to the master of your boys in which you let him clearly understand how he ought to deal with your sons and warned him that he should, without variations, follow the straight and narrow path. This, I highly approve of, and as for the books he bought that were trifling or that dealt with the holy scripture, I assure you that I am in complete accord with your opinion. For such books can only divert them from their vocation. Then, too, the intelligences of young boys are not capable of getting at the root of such matters.²⁰

This matter being cleared up, Scaliger did not ask for a change in tutors and de Lamarque retained his position. One wonders how much the boys were affected by the Reformation doctrines that were in the air at the school. Joseph as we know became a strong Protestant and at least one other of the sons was mixed up in the religious wars on the side of the Protestants. Joseph himself gives us no evidence that he was influenced this early in his life toward Protestantism but it would not be surprising if many of his later attitudes resulted from those he had absorbed from his teachers at Bordeaux.

Nor was Scaliger completely satisfied with his sons' reading list from other points of view. He wanted his children to begin their acquaintance with his god of philosophy, Aristotle. Laurens de Lamarque was at Scaliger's service but his letter of April 8, 1555, shows he was a bit doubtful:

You write me to introduce the boys to the work of Aristotle. I do not know what work you would prefer. Do you want me to read them the *Dialectics* [*Organon?*] *Ethics*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Politics*, and other books composed by the said Aristotle, prince in my judgment of all philosophers? It is not necessary to oppress tender minds by so many books. But let me know what pleases you. If you want me to read the *Dialectics* and *Ethics* as a start or some other compendium by Aristotle, your command will be carried out immediately.²¹

In spite of the tutor's lack of enthusiasm, Scaliger orders the reading he had commanded to begin and asks de Lamarque to accompany his readings with explanations suitable to the young listeners. The tutor obeys, but as we see from his letter of May 18, 1555, he is beginning to wonder whether he is capable of meeting the vigorous demands of this learned father. He decides, probably at Scaliger's suggestion, to start with Porphyry's introduction and commentary on the *Categories* of Aristotle.

Your children are very well and send you the introduction that I gave them on Porphyry. We will continue, if it pleases you, with the *Categories* of Aristotle, in giving out little precepts and making them easily enough understood. I assure you that Joseph and Leonard understand the above introduction well. . . . I don't want to recount here the work that I undertake for your boys. I want very much to serve you. You deserve to be served by a man absolute in all things, such as I am not. Nevertheless, you are welcome to make use of my service as far as it goes as much

²⁰ Bourrousse de Laffore, 1860: 61.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

as you like. The boys beg you to send 20 sols to each of them in order that they can give a present to their regent.²²

That de Lamarque continues afraid that he will not meet Scaliger's standards is clear in a letter written two weeks later in which he asks whether he should continue the study of Aristotle's *Categories* or go on to something else.²³ Scaliger gives so much advice and the tutor is so timid that the effect is practically as if Scaliger were teaching his children himself. At this point, it is a very real question how long Scaliger will let other men do for his sons what he is capable of doing far better himself.

The last two letters of de Lamarque we will look at throw an interesting light on Scaliger's relations to his fellow doctors. Some of those in Bordeaux seem to have been jealous of his growing reputation and the number of medical students he was instructing. They began to spread at intervals reports of his death with the hope that the young men who otherwise would have gone to Agen would stay in Bordeaux for their training. At any rate, de Lamarque writes:

Monsieur, no one can express the joy that your letters gave us. For a group of your rivals put us in great distress by affirming that you were dead. Since then we had no rest nor had we lain down much for a week until we received your letters by Souillebouc. . . . I well know that there are many Bordeaux physicians who kill you daily. Among them there is a red beard who goes by the name of Pichot, and another who is called, among other names, Nothus. These are the ones who kill you because they wish to divert many gentlemen from going to you but they waste their time.

I have already begun the *Categories* of Aristotle and will continue according to the rules. I promise you that two of your boys, Joseph and Leonard, know more Aristotle now than I did after following a course in Aristotle. They will rise to the first class in composition this year and I hope that in a year you will see your boys pleasant companions; but it is necessary that they take some time off now and then.²⁴

On June 26 he writes again about the rumor:

Monsieur Baudon thanks you for the good news it pleased you to send him. We are both very much at ease now. He tells me that if he knew those physicians who have killed you off so many times, he would wash their heads without water.²⁵

On July 19, 1555, because of the pestilence at Bordeaux, Joseph, Leonard, and John Constant returned home to their father.²⁶ They never returned to the College of Guyenne. Yet, so closely connected was the name of Scaliger with that institution that a legend sprang up that Julius Caesar had been a professor at the school and that his son had studied there under him.²⁷ The letters we have quoted prove this to be false.

Far from teaching in Bordeaux, Scaliger seldom left his house. He was, then, dependent on his friends for contacts with the outside world. One of these, Guy de Galard de Brassac, President of the Parliament of Bordeaux, was of great help to Scaliger isolated as he was by age and illness.²⁸ His letters gave him the news from the greater city and enabled him to keep in touch with its intellectual activity. Brassac also undertook to supply Scaliger with the books that were unobtainable in Agen. Among these were a Giraldi and the important new collection of the odes of Anacreon that Henri Étienne had just published. One day Brassac sent Scaliger some verses written by a young counsellor of Parliament, Étienne de La Boétie who had just been appointed to the office resigned by Guillaume de Lur de Longa, another of Scaliger's friends and correspondents.²⁹ Scaliger, always on the lookout for talent, was delighted with the young poet's skill at Latin meters and asked to have his respects sent to him. Brassac obliged and Scaliger thanked him in a poem in which he says that he is grateful to him for having spoken of him in such terms as to win for him the friendship of La Boétie.³⁰

La Boétie, who was almost a cultist in his admiration for friendship, was flattered to be offered that of the distinguished doctor of Agen. He eagerly accepted the offer to exchange verses with him and a lively poetic correspondence was soon under way. Of La Boétie's poems to Scaliger only one has come down to us but this one is so complimentary to Scaliger that we can imagine how pleased he was with this new friendship.³¹ Several poems of Scaliger to, or about, La Boétie, are in his collected poems. By means of them we are able to follow the course of the intimacy. At first, Scaliger is well pleased with the correspondence but as time goes on he finds that La Boétie is not writing as much poetry as he should. In order to shame him into greater production, he sits down and composes the following to Guy de Galard de Brassac, hoping that the President of Parliament will by means of his influence keep the young man from deserting the muses.

About La Boétie, for Guy Brassac

Since skilled in all is this man Boétie,
No matter what he undertakes, we find
That soon he leaves all others far behind,
Seeming for ev'ry art to hold the key.
Used to the courtroom, statute and decree,
Learned in the law, both lay and cleric kind,
He can from happy cares release his mind,
And in sweet verse a new Phalaecus be.

²⁸ Brassac lived in Agen in 1535 and their close relations probably stem from that time. One of Scaliger's letters to Brassac is dated 1539. (*Epistolae*, letter 17, 1600.)

²⁹ La Boétie's relations with Scaliger are treated by Reinhold Dezeimeris, 1864: 48-49; Léon Feugère, 1859: 1: 115, and Paul Bonnefon, 1898: 1: 209-212.

³⁰ *Poemata* 1: 19, 1600.

³¹ Étienne de La Boétie, 1892: 243-244.

²² *Ibid.*, 62.

²³ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 64 and Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 50.

²⁷ Abbé Bellet as quoted by Gaullieur, 1874: 274.

This we have seen, and more will see ere long
Unless he dashes down this gift sublime,
Depriving both himself and us of song;
Great President, prevent this thoughtless crime,
And by your exhortations let him know
We can, no more than he, those charms forego.³²

This bringing no response, he addresses another appeal to La Boétie himself with little better luck.³³ Yet, they kept on friendly terms and Scaliger speaks of him in his *Poetics* as a divine genius who is able to do much but who wishes to do little.³⁴ La Boétie had a strong reason for not sending poems to Scaliger. He was caught by the charm of young Michel de Montaigne. Montaigne succeeded his father as a member of the Cour des Aides of Périgueux. In 1557 this court was merged with the Parliament of Bordeaux and Montaigne thus became a colleague of La Boétie. Montaigne had before this read La Boétie's *Voluntary Servitude* and at their first meeting the two young men began a friendship that has become one of the classics of our civilization.

La Boétie never put Scaliger completely out of his heart and on his death wrote a beautiful lament for him. La Boétie had been in search of a friendship like those famous in Greek history and legend, and his relations with Scaliger were perhaps part of this search. When the friend of whom he had dreamed appeared, the aging poet was forced to retire into the background.

XVI. CARDAN, A NEW OPPONENT

As we look back on Scaliger's France from the point of view of the twentieth century we tend to establish a dichotomy between those who wrote in Latin and those who wrote in French. The former we say were living in the past, the latter were staking claims to the future. A little thought will show how superficial such an attitude is. Scaliger wrote in Latin, yet he influenced generation after generation of poets and dramatists who wrote in French. Nor can we overlook the fact that in sixteenth-century France the split between writing in the vernacular and writing in Latin was nowhere near as strong as it might appear to us today to have been. Scaliger was an admirer of his friend Bandello's Italian poetry, and tried his hand at composition in Italian himself.¹ And, at least once he is said to have written a book in French called *Dixains de l'homme vertueux* which begins "Pays fertil et terre plantureuse,"² nor were the vernacular poets adverse to trying their hands at Latin. Ronsard wrote poetry in the ancient as well as the modern language.

³² *Poemata* 1: 392-393, 1600.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1: 396.

³⁴ J. C. Scaliger, 1561: bk. 2, chap. 9.

¹ His poem in Italian on the death of Fracastoro is in his *Epistolae*, 190, 1600, where it is printed with Bandello's poem on the same subject.

² F. G. La Croix du Maine and Antoine du Verdier, 1772-1773: 4: 551-552.

It is with this Prince of Poets and leader of the Pléiade that the true kinship of the Latinists with the writers in the vernacular becomes clear. The Pléiade was not merely fighting for the right to compose in French (the older tradition of French poetry illustrated at the time by Marot, still flourished) though its members did feel that French was unduly scorned by the Latinists, but to compose French Poetry worthy to stand comparison with ancient models. It was a learned school, and it looked to the ancients to provide it with fresh and exciting forms in which to write. One of the great literary events of the day was the first appearance in print of the graceful Greek poems of Anacreon published by Henri Étienne in 1554.

Ronsard did not even wait for the book to appear in print but used Étienne's manuscript. With great enthusiasm he sang the praises of the old Greek and imitated his odes in French. No less interested was Scaliger. He too was inspired by Anacreon and set to work composing his *Anacreontica* in Latin. Recognizing his kinship with the French poet in this *avant garde* movement Scaliger graciously dedicated his poems to Ronsard in an Anacreontic ode in which he hails Ronsard's genius.³ Scaliger far from feeling superior to Ronsard treats him as a comrade in poetry. He also addresses a poem to the brigade of new poets wherein he calls Jodelle and Ronsard and that quick troop, the Pléiade, a generation of poets equal to the best the past has produced.⁴ Scaliger was no slave of the Romans. He recognized and welcomed the new school of French poetry. Yet he felt, of course, that serious work must be in Latin. He was writing for an international audience. And write he did—continuously.

How Scaliger found time for the tremendous amount of work he crowded into his latter years must always remain something of a mystery. To say that he was a genius, as if that explained all, would be too easy and, perhaps, misleading since for many the word would imply that he was gifted with an easy inspiration for which he deserved little credit. If one can contend—I should not do so—that poems, plays, or novels, may result from flashes of inspiration unsweated for by their authors, no one could say that the same was true for works of erudition such as Scaliger wrote. In these the amount of labor expended is staggeringly evident. Few men today could find the time even to copy by hand the multitudinous pages that Scaliger composed, let alone conceive them.

Even the list of works which were lost and never published makes a respectable bibliography. They were: a treatise on origins, exercises (exoteric, noble, and familiar), a commentary on the wind, another on Cicero's *De Officiis*, a herbal, Greek poems, letters, a treatise on semen, a book on horsemanship (stolen by

³ *Poemata* 1, 441, 1600. Needless to say Scaliger's *Poetics* influenced Ronsard. See Henri Chamard, 1939-1940: 3: 138.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: 191. Scaliger can also find a good word to say for Mellin de Saint-Gelais, a poet in the older French tradition.

a tutor), and one on oratorical ornaments (stolen by a secretary).

It is possible that all of these works were not destroyed in the civil wars which ravaged Agen after Scaliger's death and that some of them may come to light. President de Maussac, who edited the 1621 edition of Scaliger's letters, promised to edit also Scaliger's commentary on Cicero's *De Officiis*; so he must have thought he knew where it was.⁵ Yet, most of them are probably lost forever. We know, for instance, that of the twenty books on plants which he had prepared for publication, his son found only six, since the father had destroyed the other fourteen when he learned that someone else had duplicated them.⁶

This collection of plants represented one of Scaliger's great and continuing interests. He was an excellent artist, having, according to his own story, studied under Dürer, and had specimens brought to him from all over southern France in order to examine and paint them. Being a doctor whose prescriptions depended on his ability to recognize herbs, he early became conscious of the low state of botanical knowledge which then existed and set about remedying it. Though not completely satisfied with what he found in the ancients on this subject, he recognized that one way of advancing this science would be to give the world the ancient texts on plants in editions which would point out their shortcomings and offer a step for a further advance.

The three botanical works he chose for his purpose were: *The Books on Plants, Falsely Attributed to Aristotle*; *Theophrastus' Enquiry into Plants*; and the same author's *History of Plants*. The first of these he saw through the press in 1556, the two remaining were put in print after his death. That Scaliger did excellently well is witnessed by two twentieth-century scholars each of whom edited one of the texts of Theophrastus. One of them speaks of Scaliger as "the most accurate and brilliant scholar who has contributed to the elucidation of Theophrastus."⁷ The other says, "Scaliger's commentary is a work of real illumination especially for the study of the ancient viewpoint of the philosophy. It repays the careful attention necessary to understand it."⁸

The problems he was faced with and his suggestions as to how they could be solved are most clearly revealed in the letter to Gabriel Minutius, Governor of Rouergue, which he wrote as a preface to the work on plants attributed to Aristotle. In this letter, he admits that that part of natural philosophy which deals with the knowledge of plants is not only very difficult in itself but is made even more difficult by the fact that plants are not only different in different parts of the world but undergo

⁵ My check of the Scaliger mss. at the University of Leyden did not bring these missing works to light.

⁶ Joseph Scaliger, 1667, under word *Scaliger*.

⁷ Sir Arthur Hort, ed., *Theophrastus, Enquiry into plants*, London, 1916, Loeb Classical Library, 1: xvi.

⁸ Robert E. Dengler, ed., *Theophrastus, De causis plantarum*, 9, Phila., Westbrook Pub. Co., 1927.

changes according to the seasons. As a result, the writings of Scaliger's predecessors, including the ancients, are often more confusing than helpful since we do not know whether the plants they called by certain names are the plants called by those names in our region. This confusion is made even worse because the descriptions of plants in their books were often made so carelessly that one cannot discover the plants they had in mind. Add to this the carelessness with which they classified, even confusing healthful and poisonous herbs, and one can understand the danger to the patient of doctors who make use of such information. Yet the vested interests are so strong and the contempt for the advice of a stranger is so engrained in provincials that Scaliger knows that any attempts of his to correct matters will be received with ill grace. The local herbalists (a better name, he feels, would be verbalists), are willing to follow the ancients blindly and do not understand the value of actual investigations. Thus, if Scaliger corrects ancient errors, the sixteenth-century equivalent of the American Medical Association would want his work banned.

Yet he does not throw over the works of the other writers entirely; he merely demands that they be tested by nature itself, and subjects his own judgments to this test as willingly as he subjects those of others. Indeed, his friend, Gabriel Minutius, will know that if, even so, he makes 'errors, it will be excusable in one who labors in so many fields of knowledge and who has so many duties not only to philosophy and letters but to his family and fellow citizens.⁹

Scaliger's desire to know what plants were useful for curing the ills of his patients led him to an important realisation—that botany must exist as a science by itself. Hitherto plants had been studied according to their usefulness in agriculture and medicine. As a result, the problem of classification was slighted. It was Scaliger who saw that unless a system based on the distinctive characteristics of plants was worked out men could not communicate their botanical knowledge. For this insight he deserves real glory. For it has been given the credit of having anticipated the genius of Linnaeus, and the scientific methods of a later age.¹⁰

There are limits to the consolations that a knowledge of one's own worth supplies. Scaliger had fewer self-questionings than most men, but he, too, needed the recognition of his fellows in order to support the weight of his great labors. Recognition of a sort he did have, but he could not but feel that it was limited to a smaller circle than his merits deserved. What he desired was mention in the same breath with the great scholars of Europe. He had once, in his controversy with Erasmus, tasted this pleasure. Now he was to taste it again.

The opponent he picked this time was Jerome Cardan, one of the great eccentric geniuses of the age.¹¹ Like

⁹ *Epistolae*, 48-53, 1600.

¹⁰ Louis H. A. Briquet, 1812: 19-20.

¹¹ His latest biography is that of James Eckman, 1946.

Scaliger a doctor by profession, he was like him also in the tremendous range of his learning. Algebra, astronomy, astrology, physics, medicine, music, and philosophy were among his studies. In 1550 Cardan published *De Subtilitate* which "embodied both the soundest physical learning of his time and its most advanced spirit of speculation."¹² Scaliger saw this work in the edition published in Lyons in 1554, which follows the text of the 1550 edition,¹³ a fact which has caused some confusion. Since Cardan had published a second edition at Basel in 1554, it has been argued that Scaliger was unfair to write his attack against the first edition when the second was available. It is probable that Scaliger knew nothing of the second edition; it was not published at Lyons until a year after his death. When Scaliger read the wide-ranging subject matter of Cardan's book and recognized errors in it, he saw his opportunity to display his learning and correct Cardan's errors.

Scaliger called his answer *The Fifteenth Book of Exoteric Exercitations upon Subtilty to Jerome Cardan*.¹⁴ Joannes Bergius wrote a preface for it in which he tells us that, having come upon a copy of Cardan's book, he sent it to Scaliger who amused himself by listing its errors. He urged Scaliger to print his corrections but Scaliger was reluctant to do so. He was finally prevailed upon to write but only because he felt it proper to admonish Cardan in a fatherly way. It was written, he declared, in only two months, an assertion which can hardly be believed.¹⁵

The tone of the introductory letter to Cardan is most friendly. Like everyone else, he says that he was attracted to the book by the great name of Cardan; he found it a temple erected to the truth. It seemed to him to be a veritable book of nature which surpassed all others. Philo's book contains little of our philosophy, Cicero's is mutilated by time, and Aristotle's merely skims over the subject. The unsurpassable book has been written by Cardan. Scaliger is tempted to compete with him but realizes he can never reach his heights.¹⁶

From all this one would expect that Scaliger's book would be written in the friendly and fatherly way he promised. It is not. In the heat of battle Scaliger declares that what Cardan has written is nonsense and jeers at him in much the same way that he jeered at Erasmus. This is the polemical style he is used to and it is doubtful that Scaliger felt there was any contradiction present. A prince might send a herald whose speech was strewn with flowery compliments, but in the

¹² *Encyclopedie Britannica*, 14th ed., article *Cardan*.

¹³ Myrtle Marguerite Cass, 1934: 13-17.

¹⁴ *Exotericarum exercitationum liber quintus decimus de subtilitate ad Hieronymum Cardanum*, Paris, 1557. Henry Morley (1854: 2: 176) and Eckman (1946: 260) misread the title as libri xv, as if this work contains fifteen books. Scaliger meant it to imply that he had written fourteen other books under the same title which did not concern Cardan.

¹⁵ Jacques de Thou, 1740: 435-436.

¹⁶ *Epistolae*, 43-47, 1600.

fight that followed he would be no less sparing of his blows.

Nowhere is this contradiction better shown than in what was to be the preface to the sixteenth book, a sort of funeral oration which Scaliger wrote for Cardan. That Scaliger wrote an elegy for a man who survived him for eighteen years is attributable to the poor communications of the age. False rumors and true reports penetrated to Agen by the same means and there was no way of distinguishing between them. Living men were continually forced to deny reports of their deaths. As we have seen in an earlier chapter of this book, Scaliger's friends in Bordeaux were upset by reports of his death. And Bordeaux was not far from Agen. No wonder then that when Scaliger was told by a friend that Cardan had died in distant Milan he accepted the tale as true. It is unfortunate for Scaliger's reputation that he accepted this report, for at the same time his vanity made him think that his book against Cardan had been so powerful a blow to the poor man that he died of chagrin. If Cardan had been dead Scaliger's remarks would have left something to be desired. Since Cardan was alive, they were actually ridiculous. Here, alas, is what he wrote:

When the cruelty of fate had pressed on me so miserably that with my private glory was combined the bitterness of public grief, and my efforts so eminent and laborious were followed by a calamity so dire: I thought that I must not neglect to leave a testimony to posterity that the stress of mind occasioned to Jerome Cardan by my trifling castigations was not greater than my sorrow at his death.

For even if his life had been a terror to me, yet so great was his merit in all departments of letters, that I, who am but a citizen of the literary world, ought to have preferred the common good to my own personal convenience. For the republic of letters is bereft now of a great and incomparable man: and has endured a loss which perhaps no after centuries may know how to repair. I, who am but a private man, have lost a witness and a judge, and even (immortal gods) an applauder of my lucubrations: for he approved of them so much, that he rested all hope of his defense in silence, despairing of his own power, ignorant of his own strength: for in strength and power he so much excelled, that there could escape his knowledge no possible way in which my castigations might have been turned to the in-crease of his own celebrity.

But he was so great a man as to be able to show to students that if he had judged truly, he would have seen the strength of all the things that I had written contrary to his own doctrine; if he felt otherwise, the same presence of mind would have determined him to confirm what he had once asserted, so far as he had asserted what could be confirmed. I, who in that mind and hope wrote to this man, of whom I heard commonly that he was, of all mortals, the most ingenious and erudite, trusted indeed that he would not vanquish me, but who does not see that I expected hard-earned praise out of his life, through his assent, not idle quiet through his death, and as it were desertion of the argument.

Especially, illustrious men, might I have been allowed to enjoy the benignity and beneficence of one whom I knew to be most acute and confident in his own greatness. For it was easy to obtain from him, the most courteous of men, even by the simplest little letters an exchange of friendship.

Was it for one long exercised in battles or accustomed to meet with audacity all perils, for one almost worn down among incessant disputations, consumed with daily cares of writing, to dispute supinely with so great a hero? In so great a conflict and so great a dust, it was not likely that I should have set my heart upon the winning of a sleepy victory.

Such victory is not in reason absent, nor in the opinion of judicious men should it be absent, but it is of no use to my fame. For to this opinion my mind has always adhered, that every man, since we are all of us but little more than nothing, is so capable of fault that he might contend, if he pleased, with himself. But if this be the case with a most consummate man—as it is often with me and some others—his slips from truth are not to be set down in the register of errors unless he shall afterwards determine to defend them. Obstinacy must needs pass for firmness, fierceness for courtesy. He does not err through anything that falls from him too hastily, until he supports his fault with an unworthy defence. Therefore, if while he was living, from a consciousness of their truth, he received my endeavors to correct him silently, what could have been more worthy to my honour? For he would have received my words as from a teacher or a father with the most modest assent. But if he had embroiled himself in a more pertinacious disputation, who cannot now understand, from the agitation of mind already produced, how that would have gone near to madness?

So much that divine man shrewdly considered. What he could not bear, he bore; what living he could not endure, dying he could. And what he could have borne he did not bear, that is the communion of our minds and studious judgments for the public good. Wherefore, I lament my lot, since I had the clearest reasons for engaging in this struggle, the most explicit cause of conflict, but instead of the anticipated victory I obtained such a result as neither a steadfast man might hope (for who would have anticipated such an end to the affair?) or a strong man desire.

My praise of this man can scarcely be called praise of an enemy. For I lament the loss suffered by the whole republic, the causes of which grief the herd of literary men may measure as they can, but they will not be measured in proportion to the merits of his real divineness. For whereas learned men ought to excel in three respects—in integrity, in erudition, and in wit joined to solidity of judgment, these three points so completely met in him, that he seemed to have been made at once by nature wholly for himself and solely for the world. For no man was more humane and courteous even to the lowest, no man more ready for all dealings with the greatest men. Royal in lenity, popular in the elevation of his mind, he was the man not only suited for all hours, but also for all places, for all men, for all changes of fortune. Forasmuch as concerns his erudition, I ask you to look round on the most consummate world of letters in this happiest of ages; many and great men will display each his own merit, but each occupied only on this or that part of philosophy. He, however, so joined with the profoundest knowledge of the mysteries of nature and of God an acquaintance with humane letters, and expounded them with so much eloquence, that he appeared to have devoted his entire life to their study. Truly a great man, great if his powers were not more than this. But if we consider the surprising swiftness of his wit, his power, as of fire, to master anything, embracing equally the least things and the greatest, his laborious industry and his unconquered perseverance, he may be called shameless who should venture to compare with him.

I had not, therefore, a mind hostile against one whose footprint I had never seen, nor was I envious of a man whose shadow had never touched mine; but on account of

his famous arguments, many and great, recorded in his works, I was impelled to learn something about them. And when the *Commentaries upon Subtilty* were finished, there came out a kind of appendix to the former work, the book on the *Variety of Things*. Then I, before I heard anything of his death, after a custom with me, imitated myself, and composed, in three days, an excursus on it in exceedingly short chapters. After hearing of his death I formed them into one small book, that I might lend my aid to his labors; but it was done as he himself would have wished it to be done, if he had first talked over his work with me, or with some person my superior in learning.¹⁷

Difficult though it may be to believe, Scaliger was no less sincere in these compliments than in the insults he scattered through his book. His morality was that of a Renaissance soldier who allowed himself to pay his due respects to his enemy after a hard fight. War, whether fought with sword or pen, was to Scaliger a formal game, rough but with rules. There was a time for insults and a time for compliments. Both were merely part of the etiquette.

Cardan was not greatly disturbed at Scaliger's onslaught. His answer, not published until two years after his opponent's death, was *Actio Prima, in Calumniatorem Librorum De Subtilitate*. It is cleverly written. Where Scaliger wields a broad sword, Cardan uses the rapier. His most skilfull thrust is that 'his opponent is never mentioned by name, though he makes it quite clear that he is speaking to the author of the *Orations against Erasmus*,¹⁸ and the *Principles of the Latin Language*.¹⁹ He remarks upon the polite tone of the letter addressed to him and compares it with the insults he finds in Scaliger's text. How, he asks, can a man who so prides himself on his nobility, descend to the use of such epithets? What kind of nobility is it, anyway, that is based on descent from the usurping Lords of Verona, one of whom murdered his own brother? As for himself, he is content with the simple name of Jerome Cardan, though his own ancestors, he naïvely asserts, are superior to his opponent's, since they were elected rulers of the cities of Milan and did not usurp the rule.²⁰ It is a point in favor of Scaliger's claims to nobility that Cardan, who would have been delighted to expose them if they were false, does not contradict them.

Yet, in spite of his censure of Scaliger's rudeness, Cardan's replies to specific criticisms are almost equally as rude. Once the spirit of the polemic seized him, he committed the very discourtesies which he complained against. Then, when the heat had died down he could treat Scaliger with more tolerance. In the forty-eighth chapter of his autobiography, Cardan says that Scaliger attacked him in order to make a name for himself, but recalls with satisfaction that Scaliger had praised

¹⁷ J. C. Scaliger, *Epistolae*, 63–66, 1621. I have borrowed the translation from Morley, 1854: 2: 179–184.

¹⁸ Cardan, 1685: 729.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 731.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 732–733.

him as a man of "the most profound, fruitful, and incomparable genius."²¹

When we turn to Scaliger's book itself we find it an amazing mixture of sense and nonsense. In this respect it is like Cardan's *De Subtilitate* of which the same may be said. In the past scholars have amused themselves by attempting to arbitrate between Scaliger and Cardan. Naudé declared that Scaliger corrected certain errors of Cardan's but committed more than he corrected.²² Casaubon was of the opinion that Scaliger's book was equal to the writings of Aristotle.²³ Vossius awarded the palms equally. Scaliger showed himself more learned in humane letters, Cardan in Physics and Mathematics.²⁴ De Thou, who knew Cardan personally, wrote,

I admired more the incomparable judgment of Julius Caesar Scaliger, who having exercised his divine intelligence in examining the work *De Subtilitate* composed by Cardan, there found so much inequality, that he showed that Cardan who in certain places seemed to raise himself above the capacity of human nature, in others reasoned worse than a child.²⁵

So the Frenchman; but the Italian Tiraboschi defended his compatriot and declared Cardan was so superior that it was like a giant fighting with a young girl.²⁶ One of the latest historians of science, Lynn Thorndike, is moderate in his judgment. He writes,

If in some respects the sixteenth century was less given to scientific scepticism than Albertus Magnus had been in the thirteenth, yet some progress was being made in that direction. A wholesome effect was perhaps exercised by some of Scaliger's criticisms of Cardan.²⁷

For the present writer both Cardan's and Scaliger's works are more interesting for the light they throw on the state of scientific knowledge of the sixteenth century, than for any intrinsic worth they may possess. What we call the scientific method was applied by both unequally. The great mass of "facts" with which they worked had been handed down to them in the writings of the ancients and their more immediate predecessors. When we see Cardan criticizing a received belief on the basis of experiment, or Scaliger giving a personal experience to refute an opinion of Cardan, we are prone to wonder why they did not realize that none of the traditional "facts" which they accepted had any more validity

²¹ Cardan, 1663: 1: 45-47.

²² Gabriel Naudé, 1663: 1: *Vita Cardani*.

²³ Charles Nisard, 1860: 1: 381.

²⁴ Vossius, *De orig. & progr. idol.* 3: chap. 80: 1163. Quoted by Bayle, 1734-1741, article *Cardan*.

²⁵ Jacques de Thou, 1696: 1: 456.

²⁶ Girolamo Tiraboschi, 1805-1813: 7 (3): 314.

²⁷ Lynn Thorndyke, 1923-1941: 6: 283. Scaliger is given an honored place by John Herman Randall, Jr., "Throughout the sixteenth century a strong minority current of radical scientists in Italy was working at the theory of projectiles and ballistics. Tartaglia, Cardano, Scaliger, and Baldi developed these ideas in successive stages of criticism, until finally, in 1585 Benedetti formulated the main principles of Galilean dynamics" (*The making of the modern mind*, 216-217, 1940).

until they had been checked by experiment or observation than those they saw were false. But we soon realize that our wonder is as great an absurdity as any committed by our two authors. Although representative of some of the best thought of the time they could not escape the limitations of their age, any more than we can escape the limitations of ours. The sixteenth century did not often realize as Scaliger did when he wrote his letter to Minutius about plants that new and better data were needed. As Thorndike observes, "Even Copernicus largely reinterpreted previously observed phenomena rather than introduce new facts."²⁸

Thus we find acute remarks of Scaliger side by side with ones that are ridiculous. When Cardan repeats the old story that the Peacock is ashamed of its ugly legs, Scaliger laughs at him,²⁹ but in number ninety-nine insists against Cardan that the rainbow leaves a sweet odor on the leaves of trees in which it has been in contact. From his actual hunting experiences Scaliger can refute the idea that the mother bear forms her cub by licking,³⁰ but is able to scorn the new astronomical theories.³¹ Scaliger justly makes fun of Cardan for saying that spirits are corporeal, eat, and have excrements.³² He denies the virtues Cardan attributed to gems and says that a flea has more virtue than all the precious stones.³³ Nor does he fail to poke fun at Cardan's acceptance of the old tale that the swan sings when it dies.³⁴ He declares that Cardan surely must be divine since he declares that gold has a better taste than silver but does not yield it. If it is not yielded it is not perceived, so only a divine man could know of its existence.³⁵ Scaliger, less superstitious than Cardan, ridicules his belief in comets as portents of the deaths of princes by pointing out how many comets had occurred without any princes dying.³⁶ Nor does he let Cardan off lightly for his belief that the eyes of a wolf could paralyse the breathing of a man.³⁷ Yet, his scepticism often deserted him, and because Pliny said so Scaliger believed that a fowl's flesh was poison to gold and that if you threw a piece of it into liquified gold, it would dissolve it.³⁸

The book is enlivened with Scaliger's personal reminiscences. When the healing properties of balsam for wounds are called into question, Scaliger instances his own experiences while battling under Maximilian Caesar.³⁹ In a lighter vein he treats a problem in natural history by recalling that his favorite hunting dog, a

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5: 11.

²⁹ J. C. Scaliger, 1557, *exercit.* 246.

³⁰ Thomas Browne, 1928-1931: 2: 197.

³¹ *Exercit.* 307.

³² Robert Burton, 1932, Part 1, sect. 2, sub. 2.

³³ *Exercit.* 344. 8.

³⁴ Thomas Browne, 1928-1931: 2: 291.

³⁵ Henry Morley, 1854: 2: 178.

³⁶ Lynn Thorndyke, 1923-1941: 6: 185.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5: 559-560.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6: 388.

³⁹ *Exercit.* 157.

bitch named Urania, was in the habit of urinating with one leg up like a male.⁴⁰

Though Scaliger was a good enough astronomer to deny that the world was decaying because of the belief that the apse of the sun was thirty-one semi-diameters nearer the earth than in Ptolemy's time,⁴¹ he could fall into errors that amuse us. Pierre Bayle takes considerable satisfaction in correcting one of them. Bayle, writing of mistakes men have made concerning the space of a day, says:

The reader will be less surprised at these confused expressions, when he is told that the great Julius Caesar Scaliger fell a little into them. Attempting to criticize Cardan on the following question, *Why the planets seem, to sailors, to follow them, and the shores to remove from them*, he represents to him, that so trite a subject as this, ought to have been enlivened with something new, as to say, for instance, that even when we travel eastward, the planets seem to go before us. Upon which occasion he relates what the Portuguese and Spaniards experienced in sailing around the world, and gives the following reason for it. *The Spaniards, says he, go to China and from thence to the Cape of Good Hope, in following the course of the sun; the Portuguese, on the contrary, sail against the course of that planet; for this reason the days grow longer to the Spaniards, as well because they accompany the sun and enjoy its light longer, as because the sun retrogrades, and comes to meet them, but, at noon, it leaves the Portuguese behind, who, on the other hand, turn their backs to it, and, in the morning, he goes from them when they expect his rising, he rising later* (Exer. 86). Can anything be falser, than to say that the sun meets those who sail toward the Cape of Good Hope, by the course the Spaniards took? What likewise can be falser, than to assert, that the days grow longer to those who meet the sun? Now it is the very contrary, the sun bringing them a new day so much the sooner. Thirdly, what can be falser than the following assertion, that the sun goes at a distance from the Portuguese in the morning, and that it rises later to them? But how can this be, since the shortest way of meeting by a circular motion, is to go to China eastward, as the Portuguese, and to go thither westward, as the sun did, since it had left them behind it? Lastly what can be more erroneous than to assert, that if the sun rises later, the civil day must be shorter? Michalor censured no more than Scaliger's third error, except that he observed farther, that there was no occasion to consider, whether the Portuguese are favored with as good a wind as the Spaniards. And, indeed, since Scaliger had no regard to the celerity of motion, what were winds to him? Though the Portuguese were to complete their voyage in three weeks, and the Spaniards should employ a thousand on that occasion, yet this would not make a greater or less difference as to days.⁴²

Errors in fact, errors in judgment there are, but these were more than outweighed by the true things he had to say and the excellent style he used to say them. For the people of his time this was a great book, and the one on which his reputation as a thinker rested in his own and the following centuries. It remained a popular textbook as long as Aristotle's physics held the su-

premacy.⁴³ Even Francis Bacon borrowed freely from it. Scaliger called the sexual appetite a sixth sense and Bacon follows this opinion in his *Sylvia Sylvarum*, which is little more than a compilation from Aristotle, Pliny, Cardan, and Scaliger.⁴⁴ The famous passage in *Novum Organum* (11, 46) where for a moment (though he quickly backs down) Bacon has the insight that the transmission of light takes a certain time, is in all probability based upon Scaliger.⁴⁵ Scaliger also insists against the ancients that the vacuum exists in nature. He also leads toward Newton when he maintains the theory that attraction is not caused by heat alone.⁴⁶ Even when some of Scaliger's conjectures are wrong they are the best ones possible given the state of knowledge at the time. Thus, François Arago gave Scaliger credit for the most reasonable explication of the problem of scintillation [twinkling of stars] that had yet appeared.⁴⁷

It is upon this book, too, that Scaliger's reputation as a philosopher largely rests. Colerus said that he was the greatest philosopher since Aristotle, but Justus Lipsius went further and declared that he preferred Scaliger to Aristotle.⁴⁸ For Naudé this work was inimitable to all posterity.⁴⁹ One could fill this page with similar extravagant remarks made by seventeenth-century scholars. Nor has this book lacked praise since then. So great a philosopher as Leibnitz was pleased in many places in his writings to acknowledge his indebtedness to certain ideas of Scaliger's. In the nineteenth century this book caused Scaliger to be hailed by the Scotch philosopher, Sir William Hamilton, as "one of the highest authorities," an "illustrious philosopher," and a "transcendent genius."⁵⁰ The worth of the book for the modern who is not interested in the transitory interests of the sixteenth century is best expressed by this same authority.

I have quoted the elder Scaliger [wrote Hamilton,] for a truth in his language is always acutely and strikingly announced. The writings of no philosopher, indeed, since those of Aristotle, are better worthy of intelligent study; and few services to philosophy would be greater than a systematic collection and selection of the enduring and general views of this illustrious thinker. For, to apply to him his own expression, these "zopyra," these "semina aeternitatis" lie smothered and unfruitful in a mass of matters of merely personal and transitory interest.⁵¹

True, but this was Scaliger's nature. He could not work well unless the issue was one of personal mastery.

⁴³ Alfred Gideon Langley makes this statement in a note (p. 106) to his edition of Leibnitz, *New essays concerning human understanding*, 1896.

⁴⁴ Francis Bacon, 1825-1836: 4: 361 contains the passage in question which is based on Scaliger's *exercit. 286. 3.*

⁴⁵ *Exercit. 298. 2.*

⁴⁶ L. F. E. Mermet, 1809: 152.

⁴⁷ Dominique F. J. Arago, 1854-1858: 7: 65.

⁴⁸ Justus Lipsius, 1615: 2: 164.

⁴⁹ Gabriel Naudé, n.d.: 195.

⁵⁰ William Hamilton, 1860: 698, 432.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 601.

⁴⁰ Thomas Browne, 1928-1931: 5: 236.

⁴¹ Lynn Thorndyke, 1923-1941: 5: 418.

⁴² Pierre Bayle, 1734-1741: appendix.

In an unusually frank admission in this very book, he says:

Vivès maintains that silent meditation is more profitable than dispute. This is not true. Truth is brought forth by a collision of minds as fire by a collision of stones. I myself often meditate by myself long and fixedly, but to no avail. Unless I discover an antagonist I can do nothing successfully. We are more aroused by a master than by a book. An antagonist is by his pertinacity or his wisdom a double master to me.⁵²

XVII. AN OLD ENEMY AND A NEW FRIEND

Rabelais presumably died some time before May 1, 1554, since his epitaph is contained in the *Premières Poésies de Jacques Tahureau* published on that date. His death was much less remarked upon than we would imagine. A few epitaphs, none of them overly appreciative, are written and then the literary world turns to other matters. Ronsard remarks:

A vine will be born from the stomach and paunch of good Rabelais, who drank continuously while he was alive. The ditch of his great mouth has drunk alone more wine (exhausting it all with his nose in a moment) than a pig can suck up sweet milk. . . . The sun has never seen him, as long as it was morning, that he hadn't drunk, and never in the evening, as long as it was late, has anyone seen him not drinking. For, thirsty, without stopping the gallant one drank night and day. But when the ardent dog days brought back the burning season, half-naked, he rolled up his sleeves and laid himself on his back on the rushes, among the cups, and in the midst of greasy dishes, (without shame) plunged into the wine, smearing himself like a frog in the filth.¹

This epitaph gives a picture of Rabelais which is not far removed from that given in the epigrams of Scaliger we have quoted, and if Du Bellay's epitaph on Doctor Pamphagus is about Rabelais, as is supposed, we see that to this other member of the Pléiade, Rabelais is simply remembered as a riotous liver. Their colleague, Jean Antoine de Baïf writes in much the same strain, reminding Pluto that now there will be a laugher in Hell.²

If other literary men do no better than this, it is not surprising that the epitaph written by his enemy Scaliger is bitter:

The defeated bones of Baryaeus are now amidst the eternal fires. Water could not dissolve this unscrupulous scoundrel; a dog tore him to bits. God alone was not present. Why? Because he was never with God in life.³

The accident of death was not enough to quiet Scaliger's indignation. To explain it, a suggestion has been made that Rabelais' "noble Bringuenarilles," the killer of noses, the giant who swallows wind-mills might have

⁵² *Exercit.* 308.

¹ For text and discussion of this epitaph see Jean Plattard, 1921: 149-151.

² Jean Plattard, 1930: 268-269.

³ *Poemata* 1: 181, 1600.

been a hit at Scaliger.⁴ Perhaps, but the evidence is insufficient. Certain it is, though, that there is a passage in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* where Scaliger is attacked by name. But of this later.

In his *Exercitationes* (1557) Scaliger managed to say what he wanted to say about almost all the scientific and philosophical matters that had ever bothered him. He was particularly concerned to uphold his medical theories against those of his reactionary colleagues and to defend certain of his practices which had been attacked. It is in connection with such passages that the reader is forcibly reminded of Rabelais, so forcibly that he is as sure as one can be with circumstantial proof that in some of them Scaliger was hitting not only at reactionary medical theorists in general, but at Rabelais specifically. In taking up the task of differentiating between the will and intelligence, both of which he considers as *formalities*, Scaliger remarks:

So we see that conceptions of the same thing are different which were barbarously indeed by barbarians but not ignorantly by the learned called *formalities*. These things are, indeed, a subject of laughter and contempt to the new *Lucians* and *kitchen Diagoras*; but they are not neglected by that most great *Philosopher*, William Bigot, who at this time almost alone maintains this high claim in *recondite Philosophy*.⁵

William Bigot must be put to one side for a moment. That the epithets "new *Lucian*," and "*kitchen Diagoras*" fit Rabelais so aptly as to make identification almost positive is the opinion of Rabelais' own editors. Not only was Rabelais hailed as a "new *Lucian*" by his contemporaries but he paints himself in his *Supplicatio Pro Apostasia* as a cynical philosopher like Diagoras. Both terms show the contempt a doctor like Scaliger would feel for a writer in the vulgar tongue like Rabelais who held obscurantist ideas on medicine. That Scaliger's own ideas were more scientific can be easily demonstrated. If he must be placed under a master he will choose Averroes, not Galen.

I have followed the divisions of Averroes because when as a young man I first penetrated the sacred groves of the school I learned to swear by the word of this master, thanks to the instruction of Buccaferra, Pomponazzi, Zimarra, Tiberio, and Nympho, my teachers who, to tell the truth, corrected Aristotle by Averroes more often than Averroes by Aristotle.⁶

To belong to the school of Averroes was in effect to belong to no school. The Galenists swore by Galen, but the Averroists swore by observation and experimentation. Thus, Scaliger can deny that he wears chains of any kind.

I should like men of learning to become uncomplex again and no longer consider themselves members of systematic schools. As for myself, I am neither Greek [Galen] nor Arab [Averroes] and I even cease to be Latin when the father and God of eloquence, Cicero, appears to me to be

⁴ De Santi, 1905: 37.

⁵ *Exercit.* 307. 15.

⁶ J. C. Scaliger, 1557, *Candido lectori*.

wrong. No one more than I gives and awards to each one freely and even profusely the praise which is his due. For, I am not like those ignorant and ungrateful men who daring to put their titles above the works of others, sometimes enviously conceal the debt they owe us; sometimes calumnate us so that it will not be noticed that they stole from us.⁷

In another part of his *Exercitationes* Scaliger defends his use of an insoluble medication which has been attacked by a *semimonachus*, a *histrio*. These terms make us suspect that Rabelais is here meant. Rabelais was a runaway monk and he tells us himself of having been an actor while at Montpellier. We must agree with De Santi that the passage certainly sounds like him:

This trick [of prescribing an insoluble medicament] was jumped on by a certain *half monk* who having nothing else in his wallet brought it out as a novelty for us. I knew about it not from a book, like himself, but because I heard him talk about it so much. But this *actor*, playing a strange role, either ignored or forgot that. . . .⁸

Though this identification is but a conjecture, we have one place where Scaliger and Rabelais argue back and forth in print. These passages have presented difficulties only because commentators on them have assumed that their first appearance in print was the first time they could have been noticed. Actually, a very great amount of scientific and literary material circulated in this part of France in the sixteenth century that did not get put into type until it had passed in manuscript through many hands. In his *Exercitationes* Scaliger has a discussion on the terms *entelechy* and *endelechy* in which he declares that there is a difference and an important one between the two philosophical terms. *Entelechy* means "perseverance in being" and *endelechy* means "duration of motion." The first is characteristic of humans; the second of animals. A knowledge of the difference distinguishes the humanist from the naturalist. Since Aristotle defines the soul as an "*entelechy*" and since Melanchthon translates the word as if it were the same as *endelechy*, Scaliger has to point out that the distinction is important.⁹ Yet, it is a distinction of the kind that the ignorant can laugh at easily. After all, scholars should find better things to do than argue over whether a word is spelt with a "d" or a "t"!

This is too good an opportunity for anyone who wants to poke fun at Scaliger to miss. So we are not surprised to discover in the fifth book of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* the following chapter:

Chapter XIX—How We Arrived at the Queendom of Whims, or Kingdom of Quintessence, called Entelechy.

We did as he directed us for about twelve hours, and on the third day the sky seemed to us somewhat clearer, and

⁷ *Exercit.* 160. 3.

⁸ *Exercit.* 272. See Rabelais, bk. 1, chap. 34; and bk. 5, chap. 16.

⁹ *Exercit.* 307. 12.

we happily arrived at the port of Mateotechny, not far distant from the palace of Quintessence.

We met full-butt on the quay a great number of guards and other military men that garrisoned the arsenal; and we were somewhat frightened at first, because they made us all lay down our arms, and in a haughty manner, asked us whence we came.

"Cousin," quoth Panurge to him that asked the question, "We are of Touraine, and come from France, being ambitious of paying our respects to the lady of Quintessence, and visit this famous realm of Entelechy."

"What do you say," cried they; "do you call it Entelechy or Endelechy?"

"Truly, truly, sweet cousins," quoth Panurge, "we are a silly sort of grout-headed lobcocks, an't please you; be so kind as to forgive us if we chance to knock words out of joint. As for anything else, we are downright honest fellows, and true hearts."

"We have not asked you this question without a cause," said they, "for a great number of others who have passed this way from your country of Touraine seemed as mere joltheaded doddypolls as ever were scored o'er the coxcomb, yet spoke as correct as other folks. But there has been here from other countries a pack of I know not what overweening self-conceited prigs, as moody as so many mules, and as stout as any Scotch lairds, and nothing would serve these, forsooth, but they must wilfully wrangle and stand out against us at their coming; and much they got by it after all. Troth, we e'en fitted them, and clawed 'em off with a vengeance, for all they looked so big and so grum."¹⁰

"Pray tell me, does your time lie so heavy upon you in your world, that you don't know how to bestow it better than in thus, impudently talking, disputing and writing of our sovereign lady? There was much need that your Tully, the consul, should go and leave the care of his *Republic* to busy himself idly about her, and after him your Diogenes Laertius, the biographer, and your Theodorus Gaza, the philosopher, and your Argyropoulos, . . . and your Bessario, the cardinal, and your Politian, the pedant, and your Budeus, the judge, and your Lascaris, the ambassador, and the devil and all of those you call lovers of wisdom; whose number, it seems, was not thought great enough already, but lately your Scaliger, Bigot, Chambrier, Francis Fleury, and I can't tell how many such other junior sneaking fly-blows, must take upon them to increase it. A quinsy gripe the cods-headed changelings at the swallow, and eke at the cover-weeze; we shall make 'em—But the devil take 'em;" ("They flatter the devil here, and smoothify his name," quoth Panurge between his teeth). "You don't come here," continued the captain, "to uphold 'em in their folly, you have no commission from them to this effect; well, then, we'll talk no more on't. Aristotle, the first of men and peerless pattern of all philosophy, was our sovereign lady's godfather; and wisely and properly gave her the name of Entelechy. Her true name then is Entelechy, and may he be in tail beshit, and entail a shit-a-bed faculty and nothing else on his family, who dares call her by any other name; for whoever he is, he does her wrong, and is a very impudent person. You are heartily welcome, gentlemen." With this they colled and clipped us about the neck, which was no small comfort to us, I'll assure you.

Panurge then whispered to me: "Fellow-traveller," quoth he, "hast thou not been somewhat afraid this bout?"

"A little," said I.

"To tell you truth of it," quoth he, "never were the Ephraimites in a greater fear and quandary, when the Gileadites killed and drowned them for saying *sibboleth*

¹⁰ Joseph, it is remembered, described his father in terms not unlike these in *Scaligeriana*, 1667, under word *Scaliger*.

instead of *shibboleth*; and among friends, let me tell you that perhaps there is not a man in the whole country of Beauce, that might easily have stopped my bung-hole with a cartload of hay.”¹¹

Commentators on this chapter have been worried by seemingly irreconcilable facts. The posthumous fifth book of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* was not published until after Scaliger’s death and so his remarks about a kitchen Diagoras seem hardly to be an answer to this chapter. On the other hand, Scaliger’s *Exercitationes* in which he gives the discussion on *entelechy* was not published until after Rabelais’ death. As an editor writes: “What appears completely incomprehensible is that the same passage of the *Exercitationes* which it seems that Rabelais criticized is that one which Scaliger employs in order to answer the criticisms made of it by Rabelais.”¹²

As we have remarked, this difficulty disappears if one assumes that either Rabelais or Scaliger saw a manuscript of the other’s attack on him. Hardly improbable. Or, could not Rabelais have heard Scaliger’s ideas on *entelechy* when he was in Agen? And, what would prevent a mutual friend such as the printer Gryphius from carrying a report to Scaliger that Rabelais was writing a passage against him, or vice-versa? Any one of these conjectures would explain the facts; no one of them is far-fetched.

A French scholar has suggested that William Bigot might have been the tale-bearer.¹³ His name appears linked with Scaliger’s in the passage from Rabelais we have just quoted and, as we saw a few pages back, Scaliger calls him “a most great philosopher.” Scaliger in employing such flattering terms must have been thinking of his treatise *Christiana Philosophiae Praeludium* published in Toulouse in 1549. This work was published while he was in great difficulties. How these came about is not without interest. He had been away from his home looking for a better position for some time. When he returned home he discovered that

his wife, by whom he already had two daughters, not having kept her conjugal vow with him, and admitting the embraces of a companion of his, a musician, who lived in Bigot’s house, it happened that the adulterer, whose name was Petrus Fontanus, was punished exactly like Abelard, in a word that he lost the true signs of his virility: but what still increased the misfortune of our poor husband was that the principal actor in this tragedy was known to be one Antonius Verdanus, formerly a servant of Bigot. Bigot’s enemies wanted no more, and they thought it too fair an opportunity of giving trouble to their adversary to let it slip. His wife was carried off. He was accused of mutilating the man, to which several other crimes were added which touched no less than his life.¹⁴

He was put into prison and remained there until the courts had him released. But even though out of his

cell he was still suffering from the consequences of this affair when his *Christiana Philosophiae Praeludium* was printed. He had connections with Rabelais. In chapter thirty-four of the fifth book of *Pantagruel* we find him explaining to Rabelais the meaning of the woman with the moon beneath her feet in *Revelations*.

Thus, since Scaliger and Rabelais both knew Bigot, he may have been the source of their knowledge of each other’s satires. Be that as it may, we certainly feel that either could have seen the other’s work before publication.

Now, as Rabelais leaves the scene of Scaliger’s life we cannot but feel some chagrin that each did not recognize the very real, if disparate, genius in the other. Yet, we can console ourselves by realizing that if they had been more friendly we would have lost the exciting satires they wrote against one another. Panegyrics—so corrupt are we—would have made much duller reading.

For it is true that Scaliger’s poems and letters in which his object is to praise are much more conventional-sounding than his satires. Scaliger’s pen was always at the service of the great and famous women of the time. He delighted in the mixture of admiration and gallantry that was expected in such productions. Two poems are addressed to the famous Lucrezia Gonzaga full of praise for herself and her family.¹⁵ One to Vittoria Colonna praises her both for her beauty and her ability to give pleasure but warns that she is a dangerous siren. Scaliger admires her from afar but he is wise enough not to get too close to her.¹⁶

Needless to say the ladies of the royal house of France come in for their share of incense. Louise of Savoy,¹⁷ the mother of Francis I, Marguerite of Valois,¹⁸ Francis’ sister, the Queen of Navarre,¹⁹ have poems in their honor. All are in the hyperbolic mood to which those great ladies were used. Indeed, Scaliger shows himself to be the paradigm of courtier poets in these poems. He is careful to include both the ladies of Henry II: mistress and wife.

For the King’s mistress, Diane de Poitiers, Scaliger prepared a Latin version of some Greek verses. He had them printed in a unique copy and sent them to her with a complimentary letter praising both her beauty and her learning.²⁰ To the King’s wife, Catherine de Medicis, Scaliger dedicated his *Sidera*. The “stars” are famous ladies among whom Catherine is given first place. In the dedicatory poem Scaliger says that it seems impossible that France, famous both in arms and letters, could add to its glory. Yet Catherine de Medicis will do this. Her family dates from Roman times. Now it is the happy ruler of the banks of the Arno. It

¹¹ Translation of Peter Motteux.

¹² Rabelais, 1823: 8: 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8: 23.

¹⁴ Pierre Bayle, 1734–1741, article *Bigot*.

¹⁵ *Poemata* 1: 260–261, 352, 1600.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 339.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 434.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 430.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1: 431–432.

²⁰ *Epistolae*, letter 93, 1600.

will be Catherine's happy fate to have given new heroes to the world before she is received in heaven.²¹

In addition to this poem Scaliger addresses a letter to Catherine de Medicis as a cover to a gift of philosophical essays he is sending her. Catherine is addressed as the charming lover of the Muses, a worthy descendant of the house of Medicis to which Europe owes the gift of literature. He has fiery admiration for this princess, who was, be it remembered, still young and beautiful and as yet unstained by crimes. He sees her as one whose sole desire is to be of use to her adopted people. He wants to help her but is unable to do so except by sending her from afar the results of his philosophical meditations.²²

Another of Scaliger's correspondents was a lady whose fame came primarily from her great learning. She was Marguerite Vitellia. She addressed a letter to Scaliger, praising him for his learning, and asking his advice about a ringing in the ears which was bothering her. In his reply we can hear no note of condescension. He welcomes learning as eagerly in a woman as in a man. Indeed, since it is rarer, it is even more of a miracle. He writes a poem to her in which he places her in the heavens among his feminine "stars."²³ Then, in a letter to her he declares that he has for some time been struck with admiration at the number of learned women that the age has produced. Particularly has he heard of her. Her letters to him give him more pleasure, by far, than the correspondence he carries on with scholarly men from France, Italy, and Germany. He begs her to continue writing him and to keep him in touch with her work.

He is sorry to hear that she is suffering from a ringing in the ears and reminds her that it is one of the penalties she pays for her active intelligence. He refuses to prescribe for her now as a charlatan would do. He points out that the ringing might well be caused by a disturbance in another part of the body. Until he knows the condition of her other organs, he could not in honesty send her a prescription. If she will be kind enough to write him a more detailed description of her health he will devote himself to discovering where her trouble lies and how it can be cured.²⁴ This and the other letter to her we have of his show him to advantage in his role of humanistic doctor.

Yet, these were, as he well knew, but trifles. The letters that pleased him most were from the rising young scholars who looked upon him as their leader.²⁵

²¹ *Poemata* 1, 428-430, 1600.

²² *Epistolae*, letter 13, pp. 70-76, 1600.

²³ *Poemata* 1: 439-440, 1600.

²⁴ *Epistolae*, letter 66, pp. 218-220, 1600. See also letter 67, pp. 220-223.

²⁵ Scaliger always prized friendship, as his letters and poems to La Boétie and Le Ferron show us. How much he depended on his friends for an understanding of what he was trying to do is perhaps best illustrated by the letter he wrote Jean d'Alesme at the time he published his *De Insomniis*. "Seeing the miserable perversity of this age, I had resolved to renounce forever the

Among those with whom he was in correspondence was Gérard-Marie Imbert, whose friendship was one of the consolations of Scaliger's declining years. He was born in 1530 at Condom not far from Agen and must have called himself to Scaliger's attention by his studious character. Certain it is that when he left for Paris to pursue his studies further he carried with him a letter in which Scaliger recommended him to his learned friend, Jean de Maumont, principal of the College of Saint-Michel. Jean de Maumont became as fond of him as Scaliger was.²⁶ Imbert had the good sense to study at the College of Coqueret under the direction of the humanist Daurat—he who was the teacher of Ronsard and de Baïf and who was thus in no small degree responsible for the new direction French poetry took with the *Pléiade*. Imbert became friendly with those two and with other poets and scholars of the city. While studying under Vicomercatus he became particularly friendly with the future Hungarian Bishop, Andrew Sbardella Dudith, whose stormy career led him out of the Roman Church into the arms of the Protestants, whom in turn he deserted for the rationalism of Socinus.²⁷

In 1557 Jean de Maumont is overlooking the printing of Scaliger's *Exercitationes* against Cardan. In a letter dated March 15, 1557 Maumont has the pleasure of sending Scaliger two poems in Greek which Daurat and Imbert have written to adorn his book. In a postscript he mentions the esteem in which Scaliger is held by these two Hellenists.²⁸ Imbert's four Greek distichs may be translated as follows:

In spite of the radiance of her young beauty, the favorite daughter of Jupiter, wise Minerva, rejected every offer of marriage—This is what the driveling of poets have ceaselessly and falsely sung again and again, and thus it is that outright falsehoods are believed throughout the world. The cherished daughter of the Lord of the Gods, this universal Minerva gave birth to you, O Scaliger, being united in love with Mercury the eloquent son of Maia. So, if the goddess sprung from the head of Jove gave you life, it is not at all surprising, my father, that such a mother should have endowed her child with universal knowledge.²⁹

These verses pleased the young man's aged friend so much that he replied to them in a letter in Greek. Fortunately, this letter and its companion piece have been preserved. They demonstrate Scaliger's ability to handle Greek with ease in an age when such aids as de-

human race and to live henceforth only for myself. I was embarrassed that posterity might know one day that I had lived with men whose principles were so different from mine. But your virtue which comes to console me, finishes by reconciling me to my existence. I rejoice to find a man who thinks as I do. In this general depravation, whom may I please except you, my dear Alesme?" (*Epistolae*, letter 2, 1600.)

²⁶ *Epistolae*, letter 76, 1600.

²⁷ Jean Faludi, 1927: 22. For details of Imbert's life see also Léonce Couture, 1876.

²⁸ The postscript to Maumont's letter does not appear in Scaliger's *Epistolae*, 1600. It is printed in Reinhold Dezeimeris, 1876: 34.

²⁹ Prefatory verse to Scaliger, 1557.

cent grammars and lexicons were still a dream. More important, however, is their content. Scaliger's first letter is as follows:

May God give you, very illustrious young man, the faculty to think well and to act well, to you who show intellectual faculties beyond your age and far above the usual measure of your country. Your age, still tender, has been fortified by an application toward wisdom, while your country, its riches and the unruliness which results from them, lead it too often in a direction where everything is a sophistication of life. Receive, then, my greatest, my most sincere thanks for the praises which you addressed to me. All that remains me to wish is to be one day, in the eyes of others, such as you have portrayed me. Now of my works, these works which you admire; they are without usefulness for most people, and they must displease the more skilful ones. In the eyes of the masses, wisdom is not wisdom, and for the learned, the novelties of doctrine are so many vanities and stupidities. True, the teachings of the knowledge of the ancients are, in a general way, the object of my admiration, of my respect; but does it not seem to you that the dissidences between them and their mutual incompatibility is of a nature to open the eyes of anyone who is not blinded by a carefree confidence? And as a matter of fact, just as nature has organized our senses so as to permit us to flee the dangers of evil and to pursue the advantages of the good, it has, in the same manner, disposed the intellectual faculties with reference to that which makes misfortune or happiness supreme. That is why it is necessary to submit everything to examination, but not in a nonchalant manner, or unreflectingly, and not to embrace anything with a sort of servile adulation. That the ancients may put a brake on us, that must not be, in my opinion, and I say it out loud; it would be unreasonable. That they serve, on the contrary, for us as an incentive, as are the prizes of battle, in the search of virtue and knowledge. At least, here are the principles which I have continuously in front of me. I do not admit then that it is right for a well-born man to forget his position by being reduced to subaltern roles, and I am firmly convinced that work, reflection, enemies of unconcern, are the *Coryphaeu*ses, the great actors of all virtue. Adieu!³⁰

Here is revealed a Scaliger far different from the narrow-minded pedant of fable. And, indeed, it must be admitted, different from the Scaliger who wrote against Erasmus. Writing from the vantage gained from nearing the end of a long life, Scaliger sees the ancients in their proper perspective as venerated masters who may help us but who should never be allowed to hinder us. For this Renaissance mind it is not merely the substitution of ancient in the place of medieval authorities—some have defined the Renaissance in those very terms—but the substitution of the free inquiring mind for all traditional authority.

Wishing to prolong this epistolary intercourse with his "father," Imbert responds to the first part of Scaliger's letter with a defense of the Gascons. His letter is lost but Scaliger's reply to it is detailed enough so that we can imagine its parade of patriotism and learning. Scaliger is willing enough to play the game and forces a bit of his old polemical fire for the younger man's benefit. Rhetoric aside, the letter is evidence

again of how isolated a scholar like Scaliger felt amidst the people among whom his lot was cast.

Salutations

Up until now I had been struck by the vigor of your mind fortunately talented; I am amazed now in seeing how much it is a difficult one. You could have, easily and not without pleasure, listened to all the good that was being said about you, and which was said, I believe, with enough graciousness. What fly has bitten you, my dear sir, to make you draw up an unnecessary apology, in taking to task and punishing severely, as though he had played you a dirty trick, that same one who, far from thinking evil, was concerned with praising you? Well, it is clear that my trouble is all lost, and that your gratitude has already vanished.

Now, because I have said that your thoughts and your works were above the usual measure of your country, here it is that you oppose Herodotus, saying that the tranquil and fertile regions do not produce men of worth. Firstly, it is not Herodotus who could persuade me, I who have profoundly observed the connections of things in view of their truth. One sentence is not sufficient to convert, by itself, a sensible man. He, Herodotus, is not one; he is but an artisan of utilities; his word is an idle word and the fact does not exist. In view of what concerns the pleasure of the ear, our man pours forth a flux of words coming out of the sweetest of all sources; but what really is appropriate to history, he does not bother with and he goes his way, admiring himself bravely all by himself. His reasoning here is but a corpuscle without a soul, and things, in reality, are not conducted thus. As a matter of fact, men and plants do not have the same origin. The roots of trees develop themselves in the interior of the earth, and they draw their necessary nourishment to live and produce fruits; that is why Plato calls them animals belonging to the soil; but the true nourishment of man is not that which passes through his mouth; we are not, in a word, that small bag, that bottle which you see. Thought; here is the only, the true man, and the mouth of the soul, unceasingly famished, thirsty for the things above, has been placed opposite them by nature, and precisely inversely to what is seen with plants.

And besides, force, firmness, courage, are things quite different from thinking well and writing with talent. Now, in my opinion, it is this very thing which is your lot, fine friend, while that is the lot of your country, for which in your letter, you pretend to be the champion against my candor. But yet it seems that you go arguing without dealing with the real question. Gascony is not a soft country, as far as I know, nor absolutely fertile, and even the greatest part of its territory is not so at all: here it is one sort, there of another; but, in its ensemble, is a thin earth, sandy, good for the culture of sorghum, but inapt, in particular, for the production of wheat. It is not the fat fecundity of this soil which could soften those who live on it, its ruggedness would be rather susceptible to make them valiant, as we see it happen in reality. The Gascons, in fact, in the opinion of everyone, are excellent men of war; for myself, I incline even to think that they are the first among the French in the matter of arms. As to the rest, they are inferior, whether it be character, will-power or habit which deprives them of such advantages. That is why I maintain what I wrote in my letter, where it is said, if I have good memory of it, that you are more *attic* than one would expect from a Gascon. But you, you muddled up that which was so clear. You do not know then that, in nature, there are germs which remain unfecund, while habit develops, following a series of actions, besides nature, or even against it? Let us admit that the native of your country is apt with letters, as much as you like, and

³⁰ Reinhold Dezeimeris, 1876: 12-15.

even more so; but that habit, where do you find it, I beg of you, in your compatriots? You, my child, you, son of a distinguished father, thanks to a strong nourishment, after having assimilated the native qualities of your soil, you left; far from your young comrades, you threw yourself forward into the search of the most accomplished culture, claiming for yourself the conquest of personal merit which makes for superiority, and reserving thus for your part, in the infinite domain of the beautiful (which is hidden as are all precious treasures) all that is necessary for real happiness. You thus left behind you all these unfortunates, destined only to grumble one day against their lot.

But patience, if you please, one instant still, and let us talk together as friends, and quietly.

Are not, by chance, your compatriots all idle, passing their entire days and their nights wandering in taverns, or running to the Palace, armed with their satchels? And what does one find in those cases, good Jupiter, and all you Gods who hold the balances of Justice? One finds all things full of disloyalty, full of outrages. What lies! what imprecations! what tearing of justice! what gangrenes of good! what wounds of peace! what death of Christian concord! Others, without being followers of drunkenness (and let us say, if you wish, that they do not even drink wine) nevertheless go about wasting their time, divine treasure, wasting their intelligence, gift of God, to throw dice or to indulge in other dissipations. Yes! this is what they do, those, while you study. They, following their folly, cease to be men, while you, going toward wisdom, you inspire yourself from God! What is there then in common between you and the Gascons, my friend, if it is not but the view of the same sun? And if it happened that they were deprived of it, at the same time they would become blind, every single one of them, and would drag their lives in the shadows. For you, on the contrary, the real sun will shine forever; never will its brightness be obscured, for that one shines by itself, and alone, is the beginning and the end of everything.

In my eyes, life can have but one aim, toward which lead two roads, two narrow roads; it is happiness by truth and by active virtue. All the rest, for me, is but mud and error: my life is a witness. It is also in this vein that I particularly congratulated you on your application in your noble studies, and to my exhortations you answered that I had done well to egg on a man already running.

However, I would not like to have the speculations of Plato invade your mind to the point of erasing it under a lot of chimeras. What a singular idea you have to go and lodge in his Isle of the Blessed. Was it for a wise man or a serious judge to propose as a prize, after death, to those who have lived the best, those epicurean gardens which we do not even judge worthy of our search here on earth? It is not us that he could take with those sophisms, those childish images, good for small children, for love-lorn women, in love with futilities, when he complaisantly plants trees, sacred woods all covered with flowers, producing harvest twice a year, fruits of all kinds, on the shores of those delicious waters which bubble without ever drying up. And why, at the same time, not to have prepared couches, prepared beds, and, by Mercury, prytaneums to lodge oneself. For if fruits are necessary to remake that which has been decomposed, dissolved, evaporated, the rest would be just as much needed, by God!

For me, do you see, there has been for a long time, something else waiting which is far more important than these trifles as far removed as the sky is distant from chaos; the supreme reunion with the first author of things, an active identity concentrating in itself and pursuing, without effort,

its infinite evolution, superior to everything, equal only to itself and the same for all eternity. Adieu!³¹

The close of this letter is in a sense Scaliger's spiritual testament. There are but three roads possible, the ways of "happiness by truth and active virtue," and the way of "mud and error." The life of scholarship he led was dedicated to the way of active virtue.

And after? The heaven he looks forward to is not like Plato's and, if the truth must be told, not like that heavenly vision orthodox Christians have described. It is an identity with the active first author of things. The important word is *active*.

The rather brusque tone of parts of these letters was more than balanced by the good will the elder scholar showed. Imbert and his friends helped keep Scaliger's name green after his death. When Scaliger's great *Poetics* was published in 1561 it contained two Greek poems in praise of the author. Scaliger is herein hailed as a great poet; thus, the child of the Muses. And as a great critic; and thus the father of new Muses. These poems are signed A. S. D., initials that could hardly belong to any other than Imbert's old school friend, Bishop Andrew Sbardella Dudith.

Gérard-Marie Imbert corresponded with his friends about Scaliger's *Poetics*; and one of them, Jean-Paul de Labeyrie, wrote a Latin poem to Imbert in which he refers to the pun Imbert's "father" Scaliger makes at the end of the first chapter when he declares that the old word for poet, "maker" is now employed by the Italians only for makers of wine or oil. Jokingly, de Labeyrie remarks that this is not unappropriate. Wine and oil are needed for good poetry. Drinkers of water and enemies of work are not given the poetic gift.³²

Imbert wrote letters to Julius Caesar's son, Joseph, and when he published his collection of sonnets in 1578 called them *Sonnets Exotériques* since the adjective called to mind Scaliger's *Exotericarum Exercitationum Liber XV* for which he had written the Greek verses in those happy days when the great man of Agen was still alive.

XVIII. THE POETICS

From the very immensity of the work we may be sure that much of Scaliger's time in his later years was spent on the composition of his *Poetics*. Devoted as he was to his own family it is not surprising that he conceives of presenting the great work to the public as a school book written for the use of his son Sylvius. It was, as we have seen, written to continue Sylvius' education beyond the point reached by the first book written for him, the *Principles of the Latin Language*.

The preface which sets the tone for the work that follows, makes clear Scaliger's fundamental position. The study of literature is one of the most practical activities in which man can engage, a way of "active vir-

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16-24.

³² Quoted by Léonce Couture, 1876: 535.

tie." Unless the modern reader understands this, the significance of most Renaissance poetic theory must be lost to him. There is no trace of the "esthetic" position, certainly not of the art for art's sake one in the *Poetics*.¹

If this is understood, our bewilderment with the type of "universal genius" the Renaissance produced vanishes. Scaliger was a soldier, doctor, philosopher, grammarian, textual critic, physicist, botanist, poet, and the author of a *poetics*. For him all of these activities were but one activity—the acquirement of knowledge and, with knowledge, *power*. Power over the forces of nature and power to influence the mind of man. Poetry is as practical as physics.

This could be illustrated in many ways. Perhaps the best and simplest means is to take up those points where Scaliger departs from his master, Aristotle, and show that these departures were based on the practical needs of the age. Aristotle is an ancient and a Greek. Scaliger is a modern and a "Roman." Thus Scaliger's purpose is to change Aristotle's system into one which meets the demands of modern life and a tradition that derives from Rome not Athens.

For Aristotle the end of poetry is imitation. Scaliger does not hesitate to call this absurd. For Scaliger the "end of poetry is not imitation: but delightful teaching by which the *mores* of minds are led to right reason: so that by these means man may attain perfect action which is called Happiness."²

Since Happiness is perfect action it follows that the poet teaches us how to act.

Thus Scaliger cannot accept Aristotle's contention that in plays plot is more important than character. The playwright, says Scaliger, uses action as a means to his end, which is to teach character. The audience learns to appreciate the good characters and imitate them in its actions in the world and will learn to condemn the bad characters and to abstain from similar actions.³ Fundamentally poetry teaches people how to act in the world. Further since knowledge of character enables us to have power over our fellows, the practicality of character study is obvious. The French dramas of the age of Louis XIV are illustrations of this.

Scaliger is confident of the power of poetry to achieve these ends because he accepts the identification of the word with the object. The word is the image of the object and there is no difference between the thing in poetry and the thing in nature. Thus to imitate Virgil is not to find oneself a step removed from nature.

¹ This is true of the main stream of Renaissance literary criticism. The strongest voice raised against this position was that of Giordano Bruno. Leaning heavily on Plotinus, Bruno formulates objections to the Scaliger-Aristotle view of poetry. Bruno's objections are remarkably like the Romantic critics' objections to neo-classicism over two hundred years later. For Bruno, rules are the chains of slavery. Genius and spirituality are all in all.

² J. C. Scaliger, 1561: bk. 7, chap. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, bk. 7, chap. 3. See Wilhelm Dilthey, 1923-1936: 2: 431-433.

Virgil and nature are the same. This is in tune with Hamlet's advice to the players. He counsels them to "suit the action to word, the word to action." Tells them that the end of playing "was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

Now since the age is an aristocratic one and class divisions are well marked it follows that this "mirror" poetry will reflect this circumstance. Thus it comes about that the class of the character is in a play, as it is in life, the important determinant. The literary genres are ranked according to the social class of the characters.⁴ Scaliger differentiates between comedy and tragedy on the grounds that the subject matter portrayed is distinct.

Scaliger says that tragedy is like comedy in that it is fashioned from examples taken from life but it differs because of three things: the class of the personages, the quality of the fortunes and affairs, and the outcome. It follows that in order to keep decorum the style should differ. Since in comedy the characters are private persons the diction must be borrowed from everyday life. Tragedy on the other hand deals with kings and princes. Its diction must be weighty, and opposed to the vulgar.⁵ This type of distinction is made for the other genres, too.

Without underestimating the contributions of Scaliger's predecessors,⁶ it is plain that Scaliger's early canonization was deserved.⁷ His name early became and still remains the very symbol of this approach to poetry. The reason is clear. His *poetics* gave a theory of poetry which was eminently satisfactory as long as the settlement of society which produced it lasted. That is to say, in political terms, up to the French Revolution; in literary terms, up to the stirrings of Romanticism.

As long as society was aristocratic, as long as the man of the world was the producer and consumer of poetry, Scaliger reigned supreme. Whether we consider Dryden in England or Racine and Molière in France we discover this to be true. Theoreticians and poets alike follow Scaliger.⁸ Poetry teaches. What it teaches is the knowledge needed by the man of the world for dominion and power in society as it is constituted. It is not until the romantics substitute the poem for what the poem teaches, *man* for the *man of the world* that Scaliger is forced to abdicate.⁹

⁴ For an extended discussion of this see my *Renaissance literary criticism*, 1945.

⁵ J. C. Scaliger, 1561: bk. 1, chap. 6.

⁶ See Marvin T. Herrick, 1946.

⁷ See chapter entitled Canonization of Scaliger in Thomas Baldwin, 1947.

⁸ On Scaliger's influence see Eugène Lintilhac, 1887, and 1890. Lintilhac may exaggerate Scaliger's direct influence but if Scaliger's followers such as Daniel Heinsius are taken into consideration, his picture of Scaliger's position is true.

⁹ Oscar Franz Walzel, 1922: 58-84.

But Scaliger's influence did not stop with his theoretical contributions. In what today we would call his "practical criticism" he no less majestically set the pattern. Many who know nothing else about Scaliger know that he placed Virgil above Homer and since this is the reverse of what we would do today this fact has been all they cared to find out about the *Poetics*. The real questions which should be asked are why did Scaliger prefer Virgil, and why was his preference upheld by so many of his contemporaries and followers. By implication one answer has already been given. Virgil represents the well-ordered aristocratic society that is the ideal of Scaliger's time. Homer is freer, and thus to Scaliger more barbaric. Virgil's heroes are more noble, more polite, and thus better models for aristocratic conduct.

The other answer is that Scaliger in common with his fellows considered poetry somewhat differently from the way we do. What the Renaissance wanted was truly done better in Virgil. Scaliger says that Virgil showed how Homer should have written:

Nothing in short was omitted by that godlike man. Only fools would want to add anything; only insolent men to change anything. Sentences, numbers, figures, simplicity, candor, ornaments, nature, art, learning—all is incomparable, or, in a word—Virgilian. . . . Let the cravens who contend that the free genius and taste of divine Virgil were prisoners of Homer's inventions hold their peace. It was not thus. The arguments of Homer which nature proposed to him were corrected by Virgil as a schoolboy's theme by his professor. Make no mistake, this is true of all the works of the Greeks. If they hadn't said these things, we would have. All we took from them was for the purpose of improving it.¹⁰

Image by image, word by word, Scaliger compares and finds Virgil superior.¹¹

After admitting that Scaliger's comparisons between Virgil and Homer on the basis of individual passages are sometimes ridiculous because two unlike things are being compared, Mark Pattison acutely remarks:

But as poetry was viewed in that age as the art of elegant versification, Scaliger's criticism is undeniably just. The Latin embroiderer has passed a thread of gold across the unadorned work of the original. . . . Scaliger's parallel contrasts favorably with the flimsy ineptitudes of French criticism for more than 200 years after him. Scaliger's contrast of language at least directed attention to a fact of real difference. The attempt of critics of the Le Bossu stamp to extract the laws of the Epic from the poetic practice of Virgil and Homer . . . led only to unprofitable verbiage.¹²

It might be added that Scaliger's technique was of considerable influence on French verse and the *explication de texte* procedure of French criticism. This is

¹⁰ J. C. Scaliger, 1561: bk. 5, chap. 3. Joseph remarks that his father did not understand Greek poetry very well (1667, under word *Musaeus*).

¹¹ For details see J. C. Scaliger, 1561: bk. 5, chap. 3 and Hubert Gillot, 1914: 68 ff.

¹² Pattison ms. 90: 2-3.

particularly noticeable in the fourteenth chapter of the sixth book where Scaliger examines the practice of modern poets. He takes a line of a poem, says that it is good, or shows how it might be improved. He objects to faulty lines on one of two grounds: that of common sense and that of euphony. For instance Pontanus describes a lady's breasts as "nec liquido cedunt argento aut pondere plumbō," Scaliger is willing to accept the first but not the second. Breasts which hang heavily are not beautiful. He praises Fracastoro's *Syphilis* as a divine poem—for Scaliger verse makes poetry regardless of the subject matter¹³—but enters a medical objection to Fracastoro's limitation of the disease to man. Scaliger says he has known a dog who had syphilis.¹⁴ This kind of criticism is frequent and is in keeping with his pedagogical theory of poetry. On behalf of euphony he corrects the lines of the poets he quotes without the slightest embarrassment. And, his changes are often improvements.

If Scaliger does not hesitate to criticize boldly even the poets he admires, it can be imagined with what ruthlessness he treats the poets he dislikes. Though he has long since apologized for his violence against Erasmus he cannot resist taking digs against him as a poet. Erasmus, he writes, was a poet when he borrowed from others, a mere versifier when he created.¹⁵ It is for his enemy Dolet, however, that he reserves words as harsh as have ever been used against an opponent.

Dolet may be called the cancer or abscess of the Muses. For though in so great a body there is no grain of wit, as Catullus says; he, fool that he is, sets himself up as a tyrant in poetry. He has, following his fancy, set Virgil's pearls in his own resin in such a manner that he would have them thought his own. He was a wretched babbler who patched up wild *orations* out of scraps of Cicero, but these *orations* the learned would call *latrations*. He had, he thought, as good a right to make free with the divine work of Virgil. While he was singing the fate of Francis, that great and good king, his name met with its own evil fate, and he the Atheist suffered the torture of the flames which both he and his verses deserved. But the flames did not purify him. Rather, he dirtied them. Why should I mention the filth

¹³ A minor controversy has arisen on this point. Scaliger says (1561: bk. 1, chap. 2), "Poetae igitur nomen non a fingendo, ut putarunt, quia fictis uteatur: sed initio a faciendo versus ductum est. simul enim cum ipsa natura humana extitit vis haec numerosa, quibus versus clauduntur." C. M. Dowlin in Sidney and other men's thought, *Rev. of Eng. Stud.* 20 (80): 261-262, points out that Padelford (1905: 9.) mistranslates *initio* as "from the beginning" instead of "in the beginning" and says, "Saintsbury misses this point entirely. His *History of criticism* merely tells us without documentation that for Scaliger verse was the material for poetry." Dowlin is right, of course, that *initio* has the meaning in the passage of "in the beginning," but Saintsbury had more than this passage in mind when he said that for Scaliger verse was the material of poetry. Saintsbury's remark is correct, and is sufficiently documented. He says this while talking of bk. 2, not while speaking of bk. 1 where the passage in question is (*History of criticism* 2: 72.). Bk. 2, chap. 1 of the *Poetics libri septem* makes it abundantly clear that for Scaliger verse is the material of poetry.

¹⁴ J. C. Scaliger, 1561: bk. 7, chap. 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, bk. 7, chap. 4. See also bk. 7, chap. 7.

which is to be found in the common drain or sewer of his epigrams? They are dull, cold, senseless, and full of that bold insanity which, being armed with the greatest impudence, would not even admit the existence of a God. So, as the greatest of philosophers, Aristotle, when talking of the nature of animals, first describes the several parts of which they are composed, and then takes notices even of their excrements, so let his name be read here. Not as that of a poet, but of a poetical excrement.¹⁶

Only one other poet is linked with Dolet. He is called Rhodophilus. "Two are not so much poets as the fevers of poetry: Rhodophilus and Dolet. The comedy of the former is known. Nothing is more foreign from the humane viewpoint than it. It is so tasteless that it rather excites pity than laughter."¹⁷

Who is Rhodophilus, this rose lover? Since searching has so far revealed no contemporary of Scaliger who bore this name and since he is mentioned with well-known people, it seems likely that this is a pseudonym. Could it be Rabelais? For several reasons it is at least possible. Firstly, this writer is linked with Rabelais' friend Dolet. Secondly, the attitude toward his "comedy" is just what we expect Scaliger's attitude to be toward Rabelais' satire (or perhaps towards the comedy, *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*, which Rabelais acted in and may have written). Thirdly, from Scaliger's point of view Rhodophilus was an appropriate name for Rabelais. For, the letter Rabelais wrote to Erasmus attacking Scaliger begins, we remember, with these words, "Georges d'Armagnac, the most illustrious bishop of Rhodes (Rodez)¹⁸ sent me recently *The Jewish History on the Capture of Jerusalem* and asked me as our long-standing friendship demanded, if I ever saw a trustworthy person who was going in your direction, to see that it was restored to you at the first opportunity." Surely if Scaliger was afraid of offending Rabelais' mighty friends by naming him by name, the sobriquet Rhodophilus was most appropriate for Rabelais, the great friend of the Bishop of Rodez, since it would identify him in terms of the very letter in which he had attacked Scaliger.¹⁹

The *Poetics* was not printed in Scaliger's lifetime. It saw light in 1561 under the editorship of Robert Con-

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, bk. 7, chap. 4.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Joseph Scaliger calls Rodez, Rhodes (1667, under word *Rhodes*).

¹⁹ My colleague Thomas S. K. Scott-Craig suggests that Scaliger's contemporaries might remember the proverb *Hic Rhodus, hic saltus* which Erasmus says is apt "when someone is asked to show on the spot that he can do what he has done elsewhere" (1553: 31). This taken in connection with the pun on Rhodes and rose as the symbol of joy (rose is the symbol for joy—thus Hegel translates this proverb, "Here is the rose, dance thou here"—Hegel, 1942, see p. 11 and notes 31 and 32) could give the idea of "lover of gleeful boasting" to the term Rhodophilus and thus aid them in seeing that it was a pseudonym for Rabelais. To this it might be added that a translation of Baryaeus as "heavy with praise" would dovetail nicely with this meaning for Rhodophilus.

stantin²⁰ and was printed by Jean Crespin.²¹ Constantin writes the printer that he did little or no editing of the text since Scaliger had worked on it himself for more than nine years and had polished it right up to the moment of his death. Two months before he died Scaliger turned over the manuscript to Constantin since he had confidence he would see it through the press.²²

At the beginning of the folio of the first edition there is, in the fashion of the time, the usual collection of laudatory poems in Latin and Greek. The longest is by Étienne de La Boétie. Two epigrams by A. S. D., one in Latin and one in Greek, play upon the idea that Scaliger the poet is the son of the muses and at the same time their father since by writing his *Poetics* he gives birth to new muses. A. S. D. is, as we have said, in all probability Andrew Sbardella Dudith, the Hungarian humanist.²³ Another dedicatory poem in Greek cleverly compares the work of Scaliger with two other famous poet-physicians. It is by François Berauld:

Nicander, though a stranger to the soil,
Wrote splendid works about the farmers' toil.
Aratus, quite unskilled in astral lore,
For songs about the stars the laurel wore.
Not so our Julius who wrote this book,
Since he the best from all the poets took.
He was himself in craft of verse renowned,
With locks of the Pierian Muses crowned.
Nor was our Caesar like the whetstone wedge.
Which, though it edges tools, is without edge.
Rather, the perfect judge of song was he,
Wiser than all, skilled servant of the Three.
Great thanks to Crispinus are also due—
His mighty labors brought the opus through.
Accept our thanks; and, Crispinus, beware
The drones who seek another's work to share.

The praise Scaliger's work received was not confined to these dedicatory poems. No other *Poetics* ever received the applause this one did. For two centuries the shade of Scaliger could feast on such incense as has been burnt for few critics.²⁴ Even today the solid merits

²⁰ Constantin also helped edit Scaliger's commentary on Theophrastus' *De causis plantarum* (Geneva, 1566). He was the author of a Greek and Latin lexicon printed by Crespin in 1562. Joseph Scaliger says he was a "big fool" and that his lexicon is of no value (1667, under word *Constantin*).

²¹ Jean Crespin, the printer, left his native province of Artois in 1548 for fear of religious persecutions. He was a Protestant. He went to Geneva where he set up a printing establishment. The author of a famous martyrology of the Protestants, he died of the plague in 1572.

²² "Robert Constantin to Jean Crespin the printer," prefatory letter to Scaliger, 1561.

²³ Andrew Dudith (1533-1582) was a bishop, of wide classical learning, who was sent as a representative of the Hungarian clergy to the Council of Trent where he distinguished himself by his impressive orations. In 1563 he was sent by the Emperor as ambassador to Poland. There he met a lady and, having become converted to the Reformation, married her. He was successively a member of various Protestant churches and ended up as a Unitarian. He was a friend of Scaliger's young disciple, Imbert (Jean Faludi, 1927).

²⁴ Adrien Baillet, 1722, collects many of the judgments on Scaliger. The *Poetics* is "one of the most beautiful and ac-

of his labors are recognized.²⁵ By this work he achieved that glory for which he had battled all his life.²⁶

XIX. LAST DAYS

Poetry remained a necessity. In a verse letter to Brassac he claims that it is a demon which torments him and forces him to be a poet in compensation for having lost the empire his family once ruled.¹ No doubt the psychoanalyst of today would agree that Scaliger had a "demon," but he would call it a "compulsion" and he might accept Scaliger's analysis of his condition. Demon or compulsion, it was that which both enabled Scaliger to do so much and tormented him in the doing. So, his poem "To Cares":

What mean ye, ill-omened thronging band of Cares?
 What would ye, on this evil-looking day?
 Ye butchers of man's pure serenity,
 And breeders of a carking, mean old age!
 Could not ye satiate be, malicious brood,
 With poverty, bereavement, torture, death?
 O bitter spice for weary, exiled hearts!
 Why pile up woes? I hate to live. Enough!
 See not ye how in shuddering panic sore
 I dread each coming moment of the year?
 Not even slumber is a kindly maid.
 And nought I fear or worry o'er the more
 Than what I've once decided must be done.²

Yet the cares which breed the poetry are, if not overcome, stoically faced by the old poet. He writes that he is faithful to his duties to humanity and to friendship even though sleep has left him and neither art nor nature can bring it back. Old, sorrowful, and ill, he refuses to abandon himself to his ills. Reason has become his guide. At the end of his life, he tries to acquire the colors and the livery of the eternal life.³

By no means all of Scaliger's last poetry is of this type. He still sings of love and the girls with the names of Anna, Lollia, Myrtle, Ortale, and the like. But now and then a melancholy note creeps in. Many are

accomplished among the works which were ever made on this art"—Baillet; "penetrating intelligence and prodigious erudition"—Possevin; "Scaliger alone said more on the subject of the poetic art than all the others"—d'Aubignac; "Scaliger surpasses all others who have published anything on this."—Vossius.

²⁵ Saintsbury writes: "[Scaliger's] actual taste, as has been said, was probably neither delicate nor versatile. But he has learning, logic, lucidity within his range, laborious industry, and love of literature. The multitude which followed him followed him partly to do evil, but it would have been a surprise, and almost a shame, had so bold and capable a leader lacked a multitude of followers" (1900-1904: 2: 79-80).

²⁶ In *Of trappes for fame*, Sir William Cornwallis, the Younger, writes: "Even that excellent head of our time, the elder Scaliger, though he wrote many things tending to his owne glory and did hemselfe turne the inside of himselfe outwarde, yet I thinke hee wrote it to spurre on sluggish spirites to the race of vertue rather than for his owne glorie or memory" (1946: 130).

¹ *Poemata* 1: 2-3, 1600.

² *Ibid.* 1: 508. The blank verse is K. P. Harrington's (1931-1932: 607.)

³ *Ibid.* 1: 9.

about the girls he knew in the past. He remembers a certain Celia who refused herself to him and who, fleeing in the snow of the Alps, fell into the hands of a dirty robber whom she was obliged to warm in her delicate bosom.⁴ And when he remembers the charms of one who did not escape him he bursts out, "Return to me, O Gods, what you have taken away, or destroy my memories!"⁵

In spite of gout and old age, Scaliger kept his majestic figure. When he went for a walk, he held himself straight in military fashion. His light blue eyes still retained their remarkable faculty of being able to see in the dark.⁶ Nor was his great literary production lessened.

His help and consolation was Joseph, who stayed by his father's side from the time when the plague at Bordeaux had forced him to leave college and return home until his father died. Whenever gout prevented Scaliger from using his hands, he would, as Milton was to do later, dictate to Joseph on awakening the poetry he had composed in the night. If visitors prevented him from doing so he would wait until evening. His memory was so remarkable that one evening he recited to Joseph two hundred lines composed the night before.⁷

Always at his father's side, writing down letters at his dictation, employing Latin constantly, Joseph learned to write well in Latin. Each day his father required him, allowing him to choose his own subject, to write a short exercise taken from some narrative. Soon he was writing poetry, too, so remarkable for his age, that Scaliger would take him aside and ask where he found his ideas and images. Joseph would answer that they were his own invention and his father would be so delighted that he could not restrain himself from boasting of his son's compositions to his friends.⁸ Particularly pleased was he with Joseph's *Tragedy of Edipus*, the first real sign of his talent. Scaliger thus had the extreme gratification of knowing that he was leaving to posterity a son worthy to carry on the name.

Joseph was with him until the end. In 1558 autumn did not bring its usual relief. The weather continued unusually hot and exhausted Scaliger. In an attempt to overcome his weakness, the old doctor prescribed a dose of the sugar of basil, but he took more than he should have and a suppression of the urine was the result. For nineteen days he fought the pain. Finally a hot bath brought relief, but it was too late. The struggle had dissipated his reserves of strength and he never rallied. After having resisted his greatest opponent for forty-two days, he succumbed on Friday, October twenty-first.⁹

⁴ *Ibid.* 1: 595.

⁵ *Ibid.* 1: 594.

⁶ Joseph Scaliger, 1627: 45. Joseph says he, too, could see in the dark until he was twenty-three. This is not as wonderful as it sounds. A doctor would recognize the disease.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.



FIG. 2. Joseph Scaliger.

His will expressed the desire for a relatively modest funeral,¹⁰ but his survivors wished otherwise. In the midst of universal mourning he was given a magnificent funeral. Yet one wish was carried out. On his tomb which was situated on one side of the main altar in the church of the Augustines were inscribed only these words:

Julii Caesaris Scaligeri Quod Fuit

Many were the tributes in verse and prose that poured in to mark the passing of the great scholar. Among them the most moving, because it was written by a man who foresaw in Scaliger's death the sign of his own coming dissolution, is that of Étienne de La Boétie, written to Scaliger's old friend Vidus Brassac.

La Boétie to Vidus Brassac

If, Vidus, by immortal verse, I could
Renounce the limits of this fleeting good
Called life, or by a deed of great renown
Earn from posterity the laurel crown;
I'd bear the burdens of my fate with laughter
Secure in praise of those who follow after.
For who can hope forever to delay
By drugs his ineluctable decay,
Since Aesculapius escaped not death
And Scaliger has uttered his last breath?

¹⁰ His will, dated September 15, 1558, is among the Scaliger papers in the collections of the American Philosophical Society.

No healing herb escaped this latter's sight
No matter how removed or recondite;
Whether in tractless fields of snow it grew
Or deep in ice was hidden, this man knew.
He more than once by powders well compounded
The greedy hands of gloomy Dis confounded;
And souls that Orcus-ward had looked, he turned
Back to the bodies that they would have spurned.
What good to him? For now his eyes do gaze—
As all men's will—upon the Stygian haze.
Yet there remains immune to death, his name;
Safe from old Charon's touch his living fame!
Mindful of fate, his work he left in trust
For learned men to edit and adjust.
His hopes will never fail; his name will be
A holy symbol for posterity,
And many humanists for ages hence
Will read our Caesar with due reverence.
And many readers will be heard to say,
"O, happy Agen, in your walls he sang!"
O, brave Verona, from your dust he sprang!"
But let us, Brassac, who this loss does rend,
Commence the final rites for our dead friend.
Since you with somber forms are more at ease,
Prepare the funeral solemnities,
While I in garb of melancholy grey
Shall with my tears my debt to Caesar pay.
Until my death, my mourning shall not stop;
A friend may soon like tear-drops for me drop.
Our life is but one long lamenting sigh;
And we who mourn are mourned for by and by.¹¹

¹¹ Prefaced to Scaliger, 1561.

APPENDIX

I. THE SKULL OF JULIUS CAESAR SCALIGER¹

Official report of the handing-over of the skull of Julius-Caesar Scaliger to the Bureau of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of Agen.

(December 2, 1871)

Between M. Pierre-Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore, President of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of Agen, living in the said town, Lacépède Street, No. 2 and the Court of the Platform, on the one hand;

And M. Louis-Philibert Rivière de Lussan, proprietor, living at Esclaux, parish of Saint-Mézard (Gers), on the other hand;

The following was remembered, talked about and agreed upon.

M. Rivière de Lussan said, first of all, that at all times, and as son of Demoiselle d'Esparbès de Lussan, he had good and affectionate relations with the various members of the Laffore family, which relations dated back to the year 1765, the period when Jeanne de Bourrousse de Laffore, paternal great-aunt of the said Sieur de Laffore, was accepted as a nun at the nunnery of Prouillan-les-Condrom, house of the order of Saint-Dominic, of which Catherine d'Esparbès de Lussan, maternal great-aunt of the said Sieur Rivière de Lussan, was then prioress or abbess.

M. de Bourrousse de Laffore then went on to recall that Mlle Victoire de Lescale de Vérone, last legitimate descendant of a family made illustrious in the sixteenth century by two men of genius—who are for Agen a twofold glory—died in this town the 25th of January, 1853, at the age of 76, without having been married. He recalled, moreover, that this respectable lady and her inheritors, M. and Mme Onuphre Duchynski, gave him: 1. All the titles, papers, letters and documents relative to the family of Lescale de Vérone, which were in their posession; 2. the portrait of Joseph-Juste de Lescale, Lord of Vivès who, born the 4th of August, 1540, in the city of Agen, died Professor at the University of Leyden in 1609, with the uncontested reputation of being the most learned man of his time; 3. The portrait of the last lady of Lescale de Vérone, mother of the said Mlle Victoire; family portraits painted in oils which (with the enamel portrait of Jules-César de Lescale) had decorated, until the middle of the 19th century, the living-room of the small castle of Vivès, built in 1531 by the said Jules-César de Lescale, on the freehold which he possessed in his wife's right, near the city of Agen, in the charming vale which took then, and still carries, the name of Vérone. M. de Bourrousse de Laffore keeps—as need hardly be said—with scrupulous care, all the titles, autographs, documents, and portraits

which recall this name of Lescale, forevermore inseparable from the name of Agen.

Jules-César de Lescale, in Italian called *della Scala*, and in Latin Scaliger, signed his name under this last form, which can be found in the documents transmitted to M. de Bourrousse de Laffore. The Italian and French versions of this name can also be found in these documents. “Nobili et scientifico domino Julio de Lescala, doctori, Agenni habitatori,” is written in a contract of the first of July, 1531; in 1529 “I, the undersigned, Guillem Cassobe, admit being satisfied with the noble Jules de Lescale, doctor in medicine.” In 1540 “M. Julle de Lescale, doctor in medicine.” In 1529 “Received of Demoiselle Andiette de la Roque by the hands of the honorable person, M. Julhe de Lescale, doctor in medicine.”

Born in Italy, in the state of Verona, Jules-César de Lescale arrived in Agen in 1526 with Marc-Antoine de la Royère, Bishop for this town. He married Andiette de la Roque there the 13th of April, 1529, made there his will the 15th of September, 1558, died there the following 21st of October, a Friday, and was buried in the sanctuary of the Church of the Augustines. To conform to his last wishes, they put on his tomb, below his coat-of-arms, this simple inscription which he had prepared himself:

JULII CAESARIS SCALIGERI QUOD FUIT

And to which was added:

Obit anno 1558, XII Kal. Novembris.

In the seventeenth century, his great-grandson, noble Joseph de Lescale de Vérone, Lord of Vivès (great-great-grandfather of Mlle Victoire de Lescale de Vérone, above-mentioned), had put on this tomb a plaque of bronze or of copper, squared, with the coat-of-arms engraved, an epitaph with these words: “Hic jacet principum Veronensium nepos et haeres.” Also on this plaque is this other inscription surrounding the coat-of-arms and the epitaph: “Josephus Scaliger hoc monumentum posuit, anno domini 1624, memoriae eternae pro avi.”

During the French Revolution, the Church of the Augustines was sold, then demolished; in about 1792. “The ashes of Scaliger were then gathered up by pious hands,” is said in a note inserted on page thirty-three of the “*Éloge de Jules-César Scaliger*” by M. H. A. Briquet, crowned the eleventh of June, 1806, by the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of Agen. As simple as it was, this note was a well-earned tribute to the honorable citizen who, during difficult times, had saved from profanation the remains of the great scholar.

But who was this citizen? And what became of the precious relic saved by his patriotic piety? The note did not say. It was known, however, that various

¹ Translated from the document reproduced by Adolphe Magen, 1873.

people had been admitted to view secretly a skull which they were assured was that of J. C. Scaliger. Dr. Pons was one of these people; and M. Ad. Magen, perpetual secretary of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts, obtained this confidence from the mouth of this said doctor, both scientifically minded and enlightened. M. Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore had the good luck to find in the correspondence, which is part of the private archives of the Lescalle family, an original letter in which the said person, whose pious hands had gathered up the ashes of Scaliger, relates the care which he took and the obstacles which he had to overcome to accomplish his generous mission. The head of the family of Lescalle de Vérone, former chaplain of H. R. H., the Count of Artois, former abbé of the Abbey of Ambroix, who retired during the Revolution to his castle of Vivès and prudently hid himself, received the following letter, whose interest need not be pointed out:

Agen, the 28th of May,
1792.

Sir,

Justly indignant to see the sanctuary of the greatest, the most illustrious citizen which Agen has possessed, defiled, I gave myself, through gratitude, the dear and sad duty of collecting his ashes. I went down, then, with a holy horror, moved by the profoundest respect, into the vault which you possess at the Augustines, where I myself with the greatest care collected the precious remains of Jules-César Scaliger, your ancestor. I was highly delighted to have taken them away from a place polluted by impiety and sacrilege, when later on certain unimportant scholars wished to take this rich treasure from me, having them reclaimed by the buyers [of the church], stupid people who only knew how to wield the lead and demolish without knowing how to rebuild.

As I see with horror that I am to be deprived of this worthy possession and that rightly it belongs to you, I would be obliged, and many other persons also, if you would be kind enough to send me a foredated letter in which you would request me to descend or to have someone descend into the vault as soon as it is opened, to take from the ruins the deposit which honors your family. I took the liberty, Sir, of addressing you, Sir, because disposed to undertake whatever is necessary to prevent this treasure from being taken from me, I thought I might so succeed if I had your letter; and what is more, you have the right to claim the copper plaque, which was, I think, a sort of epitaph.

It is not necessary to tell you, Sir, that I am but the guardian if you will be the owner.

I have the honor to be respectfully, Sir,
Your very humble and very obedient servant,

Louis-Joseph RIVIÈRE, fils 3^e

I beg you, Sir, to please accept my best wishes.

M. de Bourrousse de Laffore knew from this letter, the original of which he keeps carefully, that the ashes, or, to speak in a less poetical but more exact way, that the bones of J. C. de Lescalle had been carefully collected among the ruins resulting from the demolition of the Augustines by a young citizen from Agen, Louis-Joseph Rivière, but he knew no more of the story. Had M. Rivière succeeded in keeping the precious remains? Had he, on the contrary, returned them, or shared them

at least, in agreement with the buyers of the church? It is still uncertain. The rest of this account will show that only a part, the most important, it is true, and the most precious, of the bones of the great scholar was found in the box.

The young Rivière who, having taken his degree in medicine, was to die in 1810 as a doctor in the French army in Spain, had been impelled to collect the ashes of Scaliger by respect for the memory of this illustrious scholar and on account of the neighborly relations which existed between his family and the family of Scaliger. The house lived in by the latter and Andiette de La Roque, as by their descendants as far down as the nineteenth century, was situated in Saint-Georges Street, opposite the façade (northeast) of the Church of the Cordeliers, almost opposite the one in which the Rivière family resided; it occupied the emplacement of the actual house of Sr. Maupas, which forms the angle at the right of Saint-Georges Street and the Boulevard Scaliger, which goes from the Garonne to the station. Understanding this neighborhood, one understands more clearly the motive which determined the generous action of M. Rivière. His family and that of Scaliger's had, since the sixteenth century, lived in the same street, near each other. His house, moreover, has not undergone since his death any essential modification, and his work cabinet and consultation office, located on the second floor, still contains his learned books. The last surviving descendant of the Rivière family, Mlle Marguerite Rivière, died there in July 1866, at the age of eighty-five.

During the first months of this same year, M. Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore, so as not to be the only one to collect information which was pertinent to the subject, went to this respectable lady along with a fervent admirer of the scientific and literary glories of Agen, M. Adolphe Magen, perpetual-secretary of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of this town. They found Mlle Rivière in a downstairs living-room, seated in an armchair and accompanied by two of her serving women. M. de Bourrousse de Laffore read her the letter dated the twenty-eighth of May, 1792, and asked her if she knew anything about the subject mentioned in this letter. Mlle Rivière, crippled, but possessing all her mental faculties, answered clearly and courteously that she knew of this; that the box containing the bones of Scaliger had remained in her brother's office from the moment when the latter brought them back from the vault of the Augustines, that her infirmities would not permit her to take them to show him, that her nephew M. Rivière de Lussan would be informed of this step, and that he certainly would be pleased to show to M. de Laffore, as well as to M. Magen, the box and its contents. She informed her nephew of the visit of the two men, and she died a few months later.

About the month of June or July, 1867, M. Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore, then President of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of Agen, went to No. 12

Saint-Georges Street, where he found M. Rivière de Lussan, proprietor and tenant for life of the paternal house; he told him the above facts and made him feel how much he would be pleased if the bones of Scaliger, obtained by the paternal uncle of the said M. Rivière de Lussan, could be given to the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of Agen, until the time when this Academic Society was able to have the remains deposited in a public monument, worthy of the scholar who, in the sixteenth century, filled the universe with the repercussions of his renown.

M. Rivière de Lussan read with great attention the letter of the twenty-eighth of May, 1792, so honorable for his family, and proved to M. Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore that the skull of Scaliger, with precise indications drawn by M. Louis-Joseph Rivière, and absolutely conforming to those obtained in the letter of the twenty-eighth of May, 1792, was still in the office of the latter and enclosed in the small box where it had been put after the destruction of the tomb of the Lescales of Vérone in 1792.

Correctly seeing in the proposition of M. de Laffore a practical way of realizing the worthy inspiration of his uncle, which was to honor, as he says himself in his letter, "the greatest citizen which the town of Agen has ever possessed," M. Rivière de Lussan took with pleasure the occasion which was offered him to become associated with this generous inspiration, and declared that all that he possessed of the mortal remains of Jules-César de Lescale would be handed over by him to the Academic Society of Agen, the latter being charged with the duty of conserving them carefully until it would be possible to put them forever in a public monument.

M. Rivière de Lussan put three conditions on this deposit: the first that this would be done while M. Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore, to whom he wanted to show his affection, was President of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of Agen; the second, that the said Sieur de Laffore would deposit equally and at the same time the original of the letter of the twenty-eighth of May, 1792; the third, that the said Academic Society would conserve religiously the mortal remains of Jules-César de Lescale and would overlook nothing that would prevent these remains being deposited as soon as possible and definitively in a special public monument, with the honors due to the memory of so illustrious a citizen of Agen.

Certain circumstances did not permit, in 1867, the depositing of these remains. This M. de Lussan wishes to accomplish today.

Consequently, the Bureau and various members of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts, called to this effect, assembled in the family house of M. Rivière de Lussan, in Saint-Georges Street, No. 12, where, the reading having been done of that which precedes, and before keeping his promise, M. Rivière de Lussan told us and reaffirmed that he proceeded in all this only with the complete, entire and very free adhesion of his first

cousin, M. Louis Rivière, doctor in medicine, living at Lusignan-Petit, parish of Prayssas, who thus associated himself with the pious thought which had prompted their mutual uncle to save from an imminent profanation the mortal remains of J. C. de Lescale.

This said, M. Rivière de Lussan handed over to M. de Bourrousse de Laffore, who received them in his capacity of President of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of Agen, the skull of J. C. de Lescale and the box in which M. Louis-Joseph Rivière had placed it himself in 1792, the whole having been kept since that time in the study of the latter, where Messieurs Rivière de Lussan and J. de Laffore had together carefully examined them in 1867.

The box is of black painted wood, glassed in front, and opening from the top. Its dimensions are: in length, forty-three centimetres; in width, seventeen; in height, twenty-four. On the cover, outside, may be read the following inscription written in the same hand as the letter of the twenty-eighth of May, 1792, and forming eighteen distinct lines:

En ossa Scaligerana armato manu arrepta e tumulo,
marmoreo a barbaris superumque contemptoribus temere
violato, regnante tyranno Maximiliano Robespierre, in ipsa
sepulchrali urna moeste pieque collecta a Lodovice Joseph
Rivière litteratore popularis potentiae amico, Hippocraticus
scientiae alumno. 1800.

II. THE SCALIGER FAMILY PAPERS¹

In 1847 the sole survivor, as far as she knew, of the Scaligers, Mlle Victoire de Vérone, a maiden lady beyond the hope of marrying and continuing the family, was living in quiet poverty in the Chateau of Vivès in Agen, France. This Chateau was the same one that her ancestors had baptized Vérone, in memory of Julius Caesar's native Verona. To her great surprise a certain M. and Mme Poizat arrived in France that year and produced proof that, though she might be the sole legitimate descendant of her family, she was not the only one in whose veins flowed the blood of the Scaligers. Mlle Victoire's father had left France for Santo Domingo in order to look after the property of his wife, Louise Bosquet, leaving her and her sister in France. This Mlle Victoire knew. But what she did not know is that in Santo Domingo he contracted an alliance, it could hardly be called a marriage, with another woman. From this alliance were born two daughters who were the mothers of M. and Mme Poizat, who were therefore first cousins. The true wife, hearing nothing from her husband, went to Santo Domingo and discovered her property in ruins as a result of the Revolution, and her husband dead. Having no money, she could not return to France and had to eke out a precarious existence in Santo Domingo until the Restoration, when the Duchess d'Angoulême sent her the money to return. Dying almost immediately on her return, she did not tell her

¹ This reproduces part of my article, The Scaliger family papers, *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.* 92 (2): 120-123, 1948.

daughter of the news, if indeed she was aware of it, of her husband's second "marriage."

The blow to Mlle Victoire's pride in learning these facts was great and she told no one in Agen about them. However, her extreme poverty forced her into relations with the Poizats, who were full of promises of financial aid.

The Poizats were exceedingly anxious to obtain both the documents in the hands of Mlle Victoire de Vérone, and that lady's recognition of the blood relationship. They hoped, thereby, to obtain official recognition of their claims to the proud name of Scaliger. They obtained possession of the documents and the family portraits in return for their promise of financial aid. Although some money did change hands, they were much less generous than they had declared themselves willing to be, and the letters between the Poizats and Mlle Victoire make pathetic reading. The Poizats used the Scaliger papers in an attempt to obtain recognition from the College of Heralds for their pretensions. From the letters relating to this matter in the archives, it appears that their case was going well when the Second Empire foundered and the College of Heralds disappeared.

Their hopes dashed, they set sail for America. Meanwhile, Mlle Victoire had died in 1853 and so the Poizats and their children remained the sole beings through whose veins the blood of Julius Caesar Scaliger coursed. Death came to them, too, and the other members of the family with the exception of their daughter Cécile Poizat, who inherited the family portraits and papers. She died in 1888 in Philadelphia. Having no family to leave her possessions to, she gave them through her friend, Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, to the American Philosophical Society in a box which was to be kept sealed until her death. In 1900 the box was opened, and found to contain the papers, portraits, and documents of the Scaliger family. The portraits were presented by the Society to the City of Verona where they now reside in the Museo Civico under the name of the Poizat Collection.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTS

The documents were written in Latin, French, the Gascon dialect, and Italian. Taken together, they give in detail the history of a famous French family for some four hundred years or more. At the present time they are in no apparent order but they could be rearranged into the following categories:

I. *Poizat-Scaliger correspondence.* This is a series of letters which passed between the last of the true Scaligers, Mlle Victoire de Vérone, and M. and Mme Poizat of the illegitimate branch. These letters tell the story of the transfer of the documents to the hands of the Poizats, Mlle Victoire's pathetic appeals for financial aid, and the history of the Poizats' efforts through Count de Magne of the College of Heralds to obtain recognition of their pretensions.

II. *Poizat family documents.* Lists of slaves held in Santo Domingo, certificates of baptism, etc.

III. *Scaliger family documents.* Here are the genealogies of the Scaligers and related families, coats of arms, certificates of baptism, wills, titles to fiefs (several of these deeds are of the de La Roque family into which Julius Caesar Scaliger married in 1529), bills of sale, and other legal documents. Among the latter are proclamations with seals of the French kings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The most interesting documents in this group are the wills of Julius Caesar and Joseph Scaliger and the certificate of naturalization of Julius Caesar.

IV. *Documents relating to the attempt of Joseph de Lescale de Vérone to obtain official recognition of his pretensions.* This category contains a large number of items and is of particular interest. In order to understand their significance, we must trace Joseph's place in the family genealogy. When Joseph Scaliger, the son of Julius Caesar, died without heirs, his sister, Anne de Lescale de Vérone, became, in default of male heirs, the sole heiress of the family. When Anne died she left a will leaving all her property to her son (by her first husband, Jean de Charrier). She made it a condition of her son's inheritance—he was named Joseph after her brother—that he carry the name and arms of the house of Lescale. Her son accepted and took the name of Lescale on the twenty-fourth of September, 1620. Also his son was Joseph (the third in as many generations) and bore the name of Joseph de Charrier de Lescale de Vérone. Since nobility in seventeenth-century France brought with it great privileges and since many people claimed noble birth falsely, Louis XIV issued a declaration on the twenty-second of March, 1666, for the verification of titles of nobility throughout the realm. Joseph immediately set about collecting his proof. This fell into three parts: (1) that he had borne arms for the King and had received a commission in the regiment of Candal and that further his father, too, had borne arms in the armies of the king; (2) that the house of Lescale de Vérone descended from the Princes of Verona; (3) that he had a right to the name of Lescale for he legally received it through his father, from his grandmother, Anne de Lescale. The many letters which Joseph wrote to support his claims are here, most of them in two copies. His petition having gone through a court in his province of Guyenne and been passed on favorably, it reached the King who issued a letter authorizing Joseph to bear the name and the arms of Lescale. This letter accepts as proven the three points that Joseph listed. Most interesting is the fact that at a time when claims to nobility were being subjected to rigorous examination the claims of the Lescales of Verona to be descendants of the Princes of Verona should be officially recognized by the King.

V. *Lives of the Scaligers.* These are a number of manuscripts dealing with the question of whether the

Scaligers were descendants of the Della Scalas of Verona. Among these the most important are *Mémoires de la Maison des Scaliger Écrites par Joseph Scaliger*, the Joseph whose titles were verified and *Mémoire sur la Généalogie des Scaliger*, 1791.

Such is a general description of the Scaliger papers. When I first saw them in March 1946, I immediately recognized that I had seen a number of them before, or thought I had. Upon checking I discovered that some of the papers were identical with ones published in Adolphe Magen's *Documents sur Jules-César Scaliger et sa Famille*, Agen, 1873. This was easily explained since Magen had reproduced his documents from the Municipal Archives, and, naturally, the legal documents would be in the city's as well as the family's possession, so there is no mystery here. On the other hand, some of the documents were the same as those possessed by M. Jules de Bourrousse de Laffore, the author of *Étude sur Jules César de Lescale*, Agen, 1860, who claimed that he was the inheritor of the family documents. Checking on this I discovered that at a meeting of the Society of Agriculture, Sciences and Arts of Agen, which took place on December 2, 1871, on the occasion when the skull of Julius Caesar was presented to the Society—the story is told in the Appendix to this book—M. de Bourrousse de Laffore recalled that Mlle Victoire and her inheritors, M. and Mme Onuphre Duchynski, had left him the following: all the titles, papers, letters, and

documents of the family de Lescale de Vérone, which were in their possession; the portrait of Joseph Scaliger, the learned son of Julius Caesar; the portrait of Mlle Victoire's mother; other family portraits including one on enamel of Julius Caesar Scaliger. M. de Bourrousse de Laffore told the Society that he was conserving all this material with the greatest care.

Although the documents possessed by M. de Bourrousse de Laffore contained a series of very important letters from the tutors of Julius Caesar Scaliger to him concerning the progress of his sons, and other documents not in the Poizat-Scaliger collection, the description given of the documents and portraits sounds very much like the collection now in Philadelphia and Verona. It is possible, of course, that Mlle Victoire divided her possessions into two parts and only gave half of them to the Poizats under the pretense she was giving them all. If this is so, the appearance of the same documents in both collections may be explained by the fact that there were duplicates in her possession. This latter conjecture is borne out by the fact that in the documents at Philadelphia duplication is not infrequent and a few important manuscripts are in three copies. It may turn out, however, that documents passed from de Laffore to the Poizats or *vice versa*. No one in Agen, which I visited for this purpose, has been able to clear up this last mystery connected with the Scaliger family.

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